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**NO PEACE AT ALL**



## By the Same Author

OUT OF DUST  
I GO WEST  
I'VE SHED MY TEARS  
NEW YORK WITH ITS PANTS DOWN  
THIS INDIA  
WITH THE 14TH ARMY  
CHUNGKING DIARY  
OH! YOU ENGLISH  
THE PULSE OF OXFORD

## Novels

WE NEVER DIE  
THERE LAY THE CITY  
JUST FLESH

## Pamphlets

FREEDOM MUST NOT STINK  
FOR EVERY THINKING INDIAN  
KARAKA HITS PROPAGANDA  
ALL MY YESTERDAYS

# NO PEACE AT ALL

*by*

D. F. KARAKA

KUTUB-  
BOMBAY

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## ESCAPE

The week had passed swiftly. I rushed around from office to office without really getting anywhere. There was the usual ritual of signing documents in triplicate. I also spent long hours collecting vital information regarding my trip, much of which later turned out to be incorrect and misleading.

The day before I left Bombay I had to appear in person at the Air Booking Centre, which was an impressive name for what was only a small, straw-built hut. Here I was to get my ticket and my priority.

By an incomprehensible delegation of authority, a Junior Commander WAC (I) had power to allot me a priority. In consultation with another high-ranking individual, an R.A.F. Sergeant, this Junior Commander WAC (I) gave me a priority 5, which was as good as getting no priority at all.

There followed a long-distance call to G.H.Q., New Delhi. An hour later I was asked to call again at the same hut, when a Squadron Leader, who on my previous visit had been discussing race horses with a friend, waited on me and my priority jumped from 5 to 3. In India this sort of thing is called 'efficiency'. Efficiency wins wars.

There were other formalities. My papers had to be cleared through the Base Censor. This is a story which must die with those who have

experienced it. Only Nervo & Knox of the Crazy Gang, which once played at the Palladium, could do justice to the parts.

The long and filtered process by which a man ended by becoming a Base Censor in India is alleged to have been contained in a directive of the War Office, according to an unconfirmed story circulating in unreliable war-correspondent circles. The directive is said to have run as follows:

*'Generally speaking each officer will be examined with a view to judge his fitness to serve on the Western Front. If found unfit for this, he must be tried in Italy. If he is no good in that theatre, he must be given a chance in the Middle East. Failing to come up to standard there, he must be tried in Burma. If unsuited there, he must be offered to the Chinese as a Liaison Officer. If the Chinese don't want him, he must, under no circumstances be sent back to England, for he can always be used as a Base Censor in India.'*

My disappointment with India, however, was not only with departments of the army. The whole machinery of the Government of India was much the same. The static forces of the administration had remained unawakened by world events. To the very end of the war they were stupidly rigid and unbending.

I had other disappointments. Progressive forces which stood for Indian nationalism had failed to give the country the right lead at that crucial moment. The Congress had got swept off the scene with the August Resolution of 1942. Impatience with the British Government's policy and pique which resulted from the abrupt breakdown of the

Cripps' Offer, had brought about a complete political deadlock in India. The premier political organisation in India, which had always championed the cause of democracy and freedom and which was the first to condemn Fascist aggression, had indirectly helped Fascism on this occasion. We had lost a political advantage and forfeited the sympathy of progressive elements in other countries of the world. Yet to many in India the Congress attitude was the only logical stand India could take.

This so-called logical position might have been justified, had some tangible form of Indian nationalism emerged as a result. Instead, when Gandhi was finally released in 1944, it became clear both to him and to political observers all over the country that the internal situation had deteriorated from the national point of view, and when he met Jinnah in the September of that year, it was only to proclaim to all the world the utter 'bankruptcy of wisdom' from which Indian leadership was beginning to suffer. The phrase was Jinnah's, and Gandhi had accepted the verdict.

In the past, the method of civil disobedience had worked well. It had acted as a stimulant to a people, who till then had little political consciousness to speak of and who felt inspired by the things they did in the name of civil disobedience. The trouble was that Mahatma Gandhi continued to believe, even after the Japs had swept across Burma and crossed the Somra Tracks on the Indian border in the March of that year, that non-violent civil disobedience could also protect us from the invading Japanese armies.



There was no realization in India of the intentions of Japan or Germany, nor was there any proper understanding of the implications of a Japanese-German victory. The words of the Burmese ex-Prime Minister, U Saw, who had said in London, 'We prefer the devil we don't know to the devil we know', appeared to sum up the political attitude in India also.

In India, those running the administration, especially that most important portfolio of propaganda (called by the misleading name of the Department of Information and Broadcasting) were too afraid of putting the bare facts before the Indian public because, in the first place, this department was run by the most unimaginative set of men that ever ran a Government department, in the second place, because of the feeling that if India knew how insecure the position of Britain was and how dangerous was the situation in Burma, a wave of panic would spread over India, partly out of fear and partly to sabotage the British war effort.

I was with Richard Sharp of the B.B.C. at the Headquarters of the 14th Army in the days when news reached us that the Japs had crossed the Burma-India border. For four whole days after the border had been crossed, Indian censorship refused to let us file the news. Finally, General Slim, who commanded the 14th Army, is said to have picked up the phone to New Delhi and told the brass-hats in the capital what he 'bloody well' thought of the whole affair. Slim had an obligation to the British public and he was 'damn well' going to let them know. The next day the Commander-in-Chief (India) Sir Claude Auchinleck, hurriedly made an

announcement in the Indian Legislative Assembly saying that the border had been crossed, but that there was, however, no cause for alarm. All was well on the Burma Front!

The psychological advantage of sharpening of people's nerves by making them realize the nearness of danger was never made available to the Indian people, and for this the Government of India's propaganda machine and Indian censorship must take the full blame.

Moreover, the Indian was more interested in the attainment of his freedom than in fighting the war. He felt that if he clamoured for freedom right then, he would get it. He believed that Britain's position was so vulnerable at the time that a strong civil disobedience movement would put the finishing touch to Britain's hold over India. Not only was this a gross miscalculation of Britain's strength, but there was also no machinery ready to take over power in India in the event of Britain quitting. The Congress did not seem to think far ahead. Its attitude was crystalized in a sentence uttered by one of its spokesmen who said: 'We want freedom and we don't care a damn what comes after that.'

It was as a result of what was happening in India and of the utter frustration which one felt, that I yearned to go out of India and get the story of the outer world. This story seemed far more exciting than that of our own petty, internal squabbles which were losing all sense of proportion.

Indian leaders had quarrelled among themselves before the day of freedom had come. They had shown the pettiness which resulted from lack of training for leadership. We had made a mockery of

our nationalism which was once a great stimulating idea.

Such was the restless state of the country when I left it at the end of 1944. So I left on a roving assignment for *The Bombay Chronicle* to see the curtain fall on the war in Europe and to see also how whole countries would stagger to their feet after five long and bloody years.

Long before sunrise I had strapped myself in the seaplane, *Cameronian* and as it rose like a bird from the waters of Karachi harbour, my journey had begun.

Through the last hours of the night we flew across the ocean. There was not so much as a ripple in the air. The great kite flew majestically on. Then morning came and as I rubbed my eyes, so full of sleep, and looked on the waters below, I knew for the first time in many years the meaning of 'freedom of the spirit'.

We touched down first at Juinri on the border of Baluchistan and later at Dibai, the port of Shajah in the Arab land. Bahrein was next and by evening we arrived at Basra in Iraq, where the plane glided down on the placid waters of the Shatt-al-Arab.

That day I felt the luxury of being able to afford time, for we were constantly putting our watches back. I experienced the richness of freedom suggested by the vast open spaces over which we flew. Often we crossed long tracts of barren desert, the *lebensraum* of the Orient; rugged grandeur, Gothic by nature, baroqued by man. There was a richness of colour in the sky, which towards sunset was vivid, in parts almost loud. The landscape

was barren except for lone date trees which relieved the monotony of the desert, and an occasional Arab village over which we flew.

From the air, Arab villages were like a maze of tricky architecture, with their narrow winding lanes and small mud houses. They breathed an atmosphere of intrigue, of a clannishness which the closeness of the houses suggested, of an aloofness which the surrounding, barren desert emphasised, of a backwardness which was apparent from their dirt and squalor. But there was something primeval about them, something strong, basic and fundamental.

We stayed the night at the hotel on the Shatt-al-Arab. It was modern, central-heated and smelly. It had the atmosphere one associates with the headquarters of the Foreign Legion. No one could be trusted, we were told ; not even oneself.

Next morning we took off early. Our first stop was on Lake Habbanyah and for lunch we stopped at Kalaia on the Dead Sea. Now we were in Palestine, the land which the Jews claimed as their legal inheritance.

Here, in a hotel which was Jewish-owned, Jewish-controlled and mostly Jewish-inhabited, we had lunch. The hotel astonished me in many ways, for it was the result of Jewish enterprise, and illustrated the remarkable talent which the Jew had for assimilating and appropriating to his advantage the natural resources of any country in which he found himself.

The dining-room of this hotel was the last word in cleanliness. Very few London hotels were so clean and there was certainly nothing like it in India. The neat damask covers were spotlessly

white, starched and laundered. There was Palestinian pottery of which the plates and cups and saucers were made. There was Palestinian glassware and if I remember rightly the smart, clean cutlery was made in Palestine also. All this showed the growth of Jewish industry and opened my eyes to the progress the Jews had made in the few years they had established themselves in Palestine. Chased out of various parts of Europe they were building for themselves a home of their own, and out of the barren desert they were creating a new economy which, in a few years, was to make them self-sufficient on that little plot of ground which they claimed as their heritage. But the Arab was now waking up to the danger of being ousted from Palestine and the Jew would not get Palestine without a fight.

Back again in the plane we did the last hop to Cairo where the *Cameronian* parked herself on the Nile. As I embarked at Nile Base, I found one of my two cases had been short-shipped. It was never found, and with it disappeared most of my kit and so much else which it was impossible to replace.

It was December 22nd. The year 1944 was drawing to a close and Cairo was getting ready for the festive season. There was not a room available at Shepherds and I had to be content with a small *pension* on the Boulevard Faud. In two days I had flown from India, over Baluchistan, Persia, Arabia, Iraq and the Holy Land, over Jericho, past Jerusalem, over the Jordan and had now come to the land of the Pharaohs, which was now the Egypt of the young and headstrong Faruk.

India seemed far behind.

*MID-EAST*

To Kipling, modern Cairo would have been a nightmare. Here were all manner of people—Chinese, Greeks, Egyptians, Indians, French, Americans, and English. Here blended the delicate perfumes of Paris with the strong aroma of onion and garlic. Here were more Mohammeds than mountains and every waiter in a restaurant was called by the name of the prophet. ‘Mohammed’ was in Egypt what ‘George’ was in England.

The Nile is the focal point of Egypt’s civilization. It is older than the Pharoahs and even the Pyramids of Geizah are comparatively modern in terms of the Nile. Generations have passed along its banks. Nothing ever disturbs the Nile, which flows gently down the centre of the metropolis. In its placid waters is reflected the mood of the people. On its banks have been built so dead a tomb as the Pyramids and so live a city as Cairo. Out of love, hate and passion, out of parched desert strands, out of the strange blending of Egyptian, Arab and Jew, Cairo is born. Cairo is equidistant from the East and the West.

There were three major influences noticeable in Cairo. In commerce the predominant influence was that of shrewd Jewish business, coloured by the enthusiasm of local Egyptian salesmen, who had a special preference for Americans because Americans, as usual, made easy prey. The black-market of the

big Indian cities paled into a light gray in comparison with that of Cairo. But while the Indian black-marketeer could never attain any social status, there was no such bar in Cairo. Success was the criterion of social standing and the means by which success was achieved did not really matter.

In architecture, in showmanship, in the way of dressing—whether it was the dressing of a window, a woman or a salad—the influence was markedly French. Occasionally a little touch of the Greek intruded, but too slightly to be noticed.

In politics there was only one influence. It was British. In Cairo there were many Embassies, but there was only one Ambassador who mattered. His name was Lord Killearn, formerly Sir Miles Lampson. This burly figure had handled Britain's diplomacy in Egypt with finesse. The treaty of friendship with Egypt, the disappearance overnight of Italians, Germans and other 'undesirables' during the early days of the war, were typical of Killearn's powerful diplomacy.

There are several stories told of him in those early days when Rommel was racing across the desert and the British armies were falling back. Some of them are true. Others are good dramatized versions of the truth. They are, however, all worth considering for there is seldom smoke where there is no fire.

Egypt's neutrality had made it possible for large numbers of aliens, which included Germans and Italians, to move about freely in Cairo. With British and Indian armies desperately trying to resist the onslaught of Rommel and his Afrika Korps, Cairo became a perfect pitch for an Axis

Fifth Column. This caused great anxiety to the British, who had to cope with an enemy who was operating both in front and at the rear. Under pressure, Egypt would have collapsed and become a liability to the defending forces. Someone had to be found on the home-front, capable of unifying Egypt and of sustaining its morale. In Killearn's shrewd opinion, only one man could do that job and that was Nahas. The trouble was that Nahas was unacceptable to the young king, who had too much a mind of his own and who asserted himself often to the embarrassment of the British.

The story goes that Killearn went to Faruk to see if something could not be done about the deteriorating situation before it was too late. Killearn knew Faruk from a boy. There were many occasions during King Fuad's reign, when the British Ambassador had given advice to the late King, Faruk's father. Killearn was, therefore, inclined always to look upon the young Faruk as still 'only a boy'. With the impetuosity of youth, Faruk was inclined to resent being treated as a kid.

At this meeting between Killearn and Faruk, the British Ambassador impressed upon the young King of Egypt the urgent need of passing an edict which would banish aliens from the country. Faruk held that Egypt was neutral, and that if Egypt were neutral, German and Italian nationals had as much right to be in the country as the nationals of Britain and France. Nor was he so responsive to the suggestion that Nahas Pasha should be called to take over the government. The young king thought that it was bad enough to have to take advice from Killearn,



but it would be too much if another 'elder statesman' were thrust upon him.

So far, the story is substantially true. As to what followed, there are different versions. The most dramatized of these says that Killearn called a quick conference of the heads of the three British services, the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. To the Commander-in-Chief, Killearn said: 'How many tanks can you spare me for a couple of days?'

The Commander-in-Chief asked what they were for.

Killearn said he would like to have a little exhibition of tanks for the benefit of Egyptians and the young king.

Killearn next turned to the Air Chief, who must have been Air Marshal Tedder, and asked if a fast plane could be spared for a short flight to Alexandria. When Killearn was assured of that, he wanted one more thing: a fast destroyer ready at Alexandria. The Naval Commander-in-Chief said that was possible.

Accompanied by an escort of tanks, Killearn is said to have paid an unannounced visit to King Faruk at the Abdin Palace. The gatekeeper failed to open the gates, whereupon Killearn stepped out of the car and asked the tanks to lead the way. In the Palace he met Faruk, who did not expect him that morning. Half-an-hour later, when Killearn left the Palace, he was bowing politely to 'His Majesty', for having acceded to Britain's urgent request. The King's signature was already blotted on the edict banishing Axis aliens from Egypt. Soon after Nahas Pasha was called by the king and asked to form a new government!

How much of all this is true, only Killearn, the Chiefs of Staff and the King of Egypt know. But certain facts speak for themselves. One was that there was a show of tanks in Cairo, which would appear unnecessary unless there was some meaning in such an exhibition. The other was that Nahas became Prime Minister of Egypt soon after that tank display.

Two other stories, hitherto unpublished, appeared to corroborate the fact that British tanks were not mooching around Egypt just for fun on that particular morning. One was of a lunch party at the Palace, which Killearn attended. Outside the Palace, at that time, a part of the road was being dug up. A new pipe-line was being laid by the Public Works Department.

During lunch, Killearn asked Faruk, 'By the way, Your Majesty, what is all this digging going on outside the Palace?'

Quick in reply, with a smile on his face, Faruk caustically replied, 'I am building anti-tank ditches for your next unexpected visit to the Palace.'

The second story is about an incident at the *Club du Chase*, which is the Huntin'-Fishin'-and-hootin' Club of Cairo. Faruk was accustomed to go there often before dinner, accompanied by his Italian Private Secretary. One day, four British Tank Corps officers were sitting by themselves at the bar of this club when they saw a young, smart, well-dressed and distinguished-looking Egyptian enter the club. A lot of attention was being paid to him. One of the British officers enquired from the barman who the young man was.

‘That is His Majesty,’ the barman reverently said.

It was a pleasant surprise for the British officers, who had never seen King Faruk before. The club was almost empty at that time, and as there was no one with the king except his secretary, the British officers decided to request him to honour them with his presence. After all, they were fighting for the defence of his country and the King of Egypt was known to be very democratic in his ways.

The most senior among the British officers, therefore, went up to the king and after making polite apologies for intruding on the royal presence, said that he and his brother officers of a British Tank Corps would be greatly honoured if His Majesty would grace them with his company. Faruk was very nice about the invitation, but preferred to be excused on this occasion.

The British officer bowed courteously and retired, as Faruk in a friendly manner said to him: ‘Perhaps another time.’

As the British Tank Corps officer turned on his heel, Faruk smiled at his Secretary and said: ‘Funny how British tanks always come to me.’

I told this story to Lord Killearn. It was, in fact, the first thing I mentioned to him at the interview which he graciously gave me. I was a little hesitant how his Britannic Majesty’s Ambassador would react to this story. Killearn smiled and with generosity said: ‘Oh, yes, he has ready wit.’

Killearn was no ordinary man. There was nothing in Egypt comparable to him and only the Pyramids are a little larger.

Ten years ago Killearn had come to Egypt from China to become the new British Ambassador at the Court of King Fuad. It was just one of those diplomatic re-shuffles in which the British Foreign Office periodically indulged. As Killearn modestly said: 'My only qualification for coming here was that I had bought a Bombay bowler (sola topee) from Simon Artz on my way out east.'

But Killearn had other qualifications. He had seen for himself and learnt from the lesson of Manchuria. With his shrewdness, he had foreseen the dangers which the precedent of allowing an aggressor to flout the League Covenant had created. He felt more than unhappy at seeing 'the facade of League inefficiency.' He realised that the white-washing Lytton Commission had achieved nothing. Britain may not have been able, at the time, to do anything positive in the shape of stopping the aggressor. The tragedy was that Britain, through its then Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, had failed even to condemn it.

With such a background in international politics, Killearn came to Egypt to handle the affairs of Britain in a country where national consciousness was beginning to take final shape and where a ticklish political situation was developing.

Egypt was important to Britain. It was the half-way house to the Empire in the east, the gateway to India and Australia. It contained the Suez Canal, the main artery of communications. It was near oil, so vital to Britain. It produced raw materials in abundance. Cotton sprouted on the banks of the Nile in as plentiful a quantity as weeds grew in an abandoned English back-garden.

It was, therefore, essential for Britain to hold Egypt. But the conscience of Britain and the growth of progressive world opinion would not allow it to be held at the point of the sword. British troops which had been in Egypt since 1882 could scarcely continue to remain there by reason of the original occupation. It was Killearn's job to keep Egypt lined up with Britain, but as a free country, whose independence Britain accepted and guaranteed. Egypt, in turn, regularized the presence of British troops on its soil because it was essential to Britain's security in the Middle East that Britain should have a military base in Egypt.

'The Egyptians are great legalists,' Killearn said to me. They never like the presence of British troops in their country, but if the presence of these troops is regularized by a treaty, that is all right with them. Today our troops are in Egypt with a mandate from the Egyptian government.'

Therefore, when the Egyptian Treaty was signed in 1936, Killearn had made a landmark in the history of the British Empire, and at the same time, he had given to the people of Egypt a new birth. The independence of Egypt was now an accomplished, accepted fact. Nothing could have been better timed, for the Middle East was soon confronted with a delicate situation arising out of the encroachments of Italy in Eritrea and of Nazi Germany in Central Europe. The Fascist doctrine was in danger of spreading and Egypt was on the Axis line from Berlin to Baghdad.

In Egypt, likewise, there had come a desire to unite. The various political parties presented a united front which Britain could no longer ignore.

Killearn was the first to realise that both statesmanship and diplomacy demanded quick action and quick decision. In what followed it was reasonable to presume that the Foreign Office was wisely guided by the man-on-the-spot and to that extent, the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty must be regarded as Killearn's child.

As I saw Killearn at the Embassy, I was conscious of being in the presence of a man who had accomplished something both for Britain and for Egypt. He seemed different from the type of British statesman who was accustomed to vacillate. Killearn believed in making a decision. He was not afraid of making a mistake.

His mental stature was in keeping with the physical. When I entered his room I could not, at first, see him, even as one could not see the tree for the forest. But he was there and filled the room with his presence. He was, however, gracious enough to leave room for others.

I remember my entry into his room very vividly. His A.D.C. opened the door and the desk at which he worked faced me. But the chair was empty. Killearn came upon me from the side. It was so like his diplomacy and so similar to the attitude he had adopted in Egypt. He wanted to see first, before allowing himself to be seen. When I heard his full-throated voice, I turned to offer my hand, but all I could see before my eyes was the third button of his khaki gaberdine coat. Then I looked up and saw him, towering above me. One had to look up to him, even as one did at the portraits which hung in his room. They were the

portraits of the former British Ambassadors in Egypt.

When Killearn was raised to the peerage, he chose the name of the little place in Scotland where he was born. He had an affection for it and, as he said, he wanted to perpetuate the name.

In his answer was to be found his self-assurance. Unconsciously he had revealed his faith in himself and his ability to be able to perpetuate the name of a little village in Scotland. There was no false modesty about the man. He knew what influence he had in Egypt and he was ready to use it, but only when necessary. He also knew the influence he wielded in the foreign policy of Britain in the Middle East. He had guided Whitehall correctly on too many occasions, making it difficult for anyone in the Foreign Office to risk departing from his advice.

There are many stories about Lord Killearn which it is not permissible to tell now. They are little stories, but when some years hence, the history of the war will be written more dispassionately and more impersonally than now, and when the story of British Foreign policy before and during that war is told, these stories will find a place in that document. They are human stories which reveal what Killearn did for Britain in those dark days of the Desert War. Those who are aware of the part he played during that campaign, feel that he saved the Allies at least two divisions and what was more, he saved the face of Britain in the Middle East on more than one occasion.

Killearn believed that the function of a diplomat in war time was to provide the fighting forces

of his country with a secure base from which to operate. The base had to be secure not only in the military sense of the term, but also from the point of view of local morale. What he did in getting this base secure was typical of the man. The exit from Egypt of Germans, Italians and other enemies of Britain, nipped in the bud the attempt of the Germans to establish a Fifth Column in Egypt.

Killearn acted firmly when necessary, but his was not just the strong hand in a velvet glove. He had a sneaking affection for Egypt's aspirations and an understanding of the people. He believed and knew better than other British statesmen cared to admit that the free status of Egypt was *a fact* and that it was dangerous to ignore or pretend that it did not exist. He was big enough to be aware of the realities of the situation and to be aware also of that something intangible—that 'non-vocal, evolutionary process along democratic lines' which was taking shape in modern Egypt.

Killearn's realism was in marked contrast to the vagueness of those who had a tendency of saying that Egypt was not ripe for self-government, or that it was backward in political thought. The thing that mattered to him was that Egypt already had self-government.

There was one other quality in Killearn. He never let down his friends and never lacked the ordinary courtesies demanded of a man in his office. When Nahas's term of office as Prime Minister of Egypt came abruptly to an end, Killearn did not hesitate to ask Nahas to lunch as was his established custom, even though there were some in the hierarchy of British foreign affairs who wondered if such an



invitation would indicate any British preference for him. But Nahas was the out-going Prime Minister and nothing would stop Killearn from extending the usual invitation to him.

It was refreshing to talk to this Sphinx at the Embassy. One understood then why Egypt had stood so well behind Britain in the days when Rommel had reached El Alamein and was knocking at the gates of Alexandria. Britain was not much liked by the Egyptians but Killearn's foresight in bringing Nahas into the Government made Egypt stand like a rock behind the British defences. Killearn was a big man in many senses of the word. He had bluff, he was strong ; he had a forceful personality. He was an all-rounder really. He went golfing with a gun, because the crows used to get at the ball. At the end of a day's round, his score card read '79 and 6 crows.'

When my air-craft parked on the Nile and we were driven into town, I did not anticipate the shortage of accommodation from which hotels in Egypt suffered. My first call was at Shepherds Hotel where they did not even have time to look at me, much less give a room. With a shrug of his shoulders, the receptionist told me none were available. When I persisted with my enquiry he informed me that there would not be any accommodation for some time. I contented myself with getting a cheap room in a small *pension* on the Boulevard Faud, but I kept persisting at Shepherds Hotel till finally they gave me a room.

Very little notice was taken of me for the first few days, until one day a letter addressed to me arrived by messenger from the British Embassy. It was delivered to me in person by the Hall Porter who bowed three times. A few days later my name appeared in the social and personal column of two Cairo newspapers, one English and the other Arabic. It disclosed the fact that I had 'the honour of having lunch with the British Ambassador'. Nothing better could have happened to me in terms of Shepherds Hotel, for everybody on the hotel staff bowed to me after that. Lunch at the embassy was the hall-mark of social success in Egyptian circles.

It was at this lunch that I sat next to an English girl in uniform whose shoulder flash read 'Y.W.C.A.' She was in charge of the Cairo branch. I did not get her name when I was introduced, but our conversation ran rather smoothly and we decided to have lunch together a day or two later. We lunched at Meena House at the foot of the Pyramids. Not knowing how to begin conversation with her, I asked her to tell me something about herself, her background, her family, so I would know what her interests in life were, where she came from and what sort of conversation she would like.

'Well, what would you like to know about me?' she asked.

'For instance, if I am not impertinent, what does your father do?'

'Well,' she hesitated and faltered, 'he's...a Bank Manager.'

'Oh, how nice,' I replied, visualizing him as an upright, correct, a somewhat colourless English bank manager, somewhere in Cheltenham.

There was a pause and I continued questioning her. 'Lloyds Bank?'

'No.'

'National Provincial?'

'No.'

I thought she was not very co-operative, so I said, 'Well, I wasn't trying to be inquisitive but...'

'Well, it's rather awkward,' she said. 'You see, my father is the Governor of the Bank of England.'

'Bank of what?' I said.

'Of England,' she replied calmly.

'Oh,' I said, regaining my composure. 'Bank of England?'

There was an awkward pause in which I thought fast for something to say. 'You couldn't fix a little overdraft account for me, could you?' I said finally.

The war made one meet people from all walks of life. The old barriers had been broken down and one judged people for their own selves rather than for their background, their wealth or their power. You were liked if you were a nice person. You were disliked if you were not. But this new sense of values was absent from the Egyptians in Cairo, perhaps because the Panzers of the Afrika Korps had stopped outside the gates of Alexandria and never reached the city of Cairo.

In spite of the War, the predominant note of this modern city was its affluence. The shoddy, ill-clad beggars who slept in the street corners, did not stand out in the economy of the metropolis as did the baccarat players at private clubs.

One day, as I was sipping a drink in Shepherds

lounge, an Egyptian friend of mine, whom I had known in India, nudged me and drew my attention to the presence of a very ordinary individual who had appeared on the scene.

‘Who is he?’ I naively asked.

‘You don’t know him?’ my friend said in surprise.

‘No.’

‘My dear fellow, that is Greekcopulos (the name is altered for obvious reasons.) If you don’t know Greekcopulos, you don’t know Egypt. Everyone in Egypt—that is, all the right people—know Greekcopulos.’

‘Who is Greekcopulos?’ I asked.

My friend whistled. He hit his forehead with his hand, turned to the other people in our party and said: ‘Our War Correspondent friend wants to know who is Greekcopulos.’

Everyone was very surprised at my ignorance. For a few moments I felt quite odd. Perhaps I should know Greekcopulos. Perhaps he was the Prime Minister or something, but then all Egyptian Prime Ministers were Pashas. Perhaps he was like Nahas, a political figure whom everyone in and out of Egypt knew by name. However, since I was ignorant, I thought I might as well find out for a future occasion. Perhaps if he were that important I might even try for an exclusive interview.

‘Well, who is he?’ I persisted.

‘He is the one who has called the biggest bancos at the—Club. One shout of twenty-thousand pounds.’

‘No, no,’ said another man in the party, ‘you exaggerate. It was only seven thousand pounds.’

'I accept. So it was seven thousand pounds!'

'And then?' I asked.

'He lost.'

'So what!'

'So what!' he repeated my words in surprise.

'My dear friend, even the King of Egypt has never called bancos of seven thousand pounds.'

'Yes, but who is he?'

'He is Greekcopulos.'

'But what is he in normal life? What does he do for a living?'

'He doesn't have to do anything for a living. He is lucky.'

'What does he do all day?'

'He plays cards. He is very clever, fantastic in fact. He realised that in everything else you have to pay income-tax. So Greekcopulos plays cards and pays no income-tax.'

'That's ingenious,' I said, having at last got the trend of the argument, as I dipped into the plateful of peanuts which might as well have been piastres.

I looked around the lounge and saw Shepherds flock, the cross section of well-to-do Cairo—the bank balances, the nouveaux riches, the bourgeoisie. To Shepherds came the Ponsonbys, who were the little Blimps of England. To Shepherds came the Jodhpurs of India, the Snuzzlebergers, once of Berlin, the Hamburgers of America, the Goldsteins of Austria, now of Tel-Aviv, the Levys, who once published books on art in Vienna but who, in Cairo, produced much better Turkish coffee. To Shepherds came the petits Pashas, the *monde* and the *demi-monde*. To Shepherds also came war correspondents, for where else was the war?

For a moment my mind went back to the days of the desert fighting and the days of El Alamein. I thought also of the Indians, my countrymen of the Fourth Division, who had fought to make Cairo safe for democracy and safe for Greekcopulos to call his bancos.

None of those men—Indian or British—who fell fighting in the desert, will ever know what they gave their lives for. I remember some of those Desert Rats still wandering aimlessly about the streets of Cairo, wondering how it was that while the local Naafi shops had run out of good brands of cigarettes, Egyptians sitting around small tables at Groppi's, with their peroxidized concubines, somehow managed to produce boxes of Lucky Strike, State Express, Senior Service and Chesterfield.

I had hardly been in Cairo a couple of days when I witnessed the first spot of bother which occurred in the middle of the city and which was quickly hushed up. But it was sufficiently grave to necessitate a curfew for British troops. Cairo was put out of bounds by G. H. Q. for a couple of days.

The trouble started when a group of young Egyptian students marched into the shop of Weinhart, the Court photographer and 'assaulted' Mr. Churchill's picture which was resting on an easel. The 'bad boys' then proceeded to stamp on it, crush the glass and tear up the picture itself. All this took place in the Kasr-el-Nil, the most fashionable street of Cairo.

Behind this little incident, which at first appeared

to be irresponsible hooliganism, was a deliberate, calculated insult to the British Government. The Egyptian elections were shortly to take place and the issue of the Sudan's return to Egypt was being agitated for by the anti-government party. In little circles at Groppi's the Egyptian whispered into the ear of the man next to him, the one word 'Nahas'. According to them Nahas was behind all this. The same Egyptians who had worshipped Nahas when he was in office, now called him by all manner of names.

The story of Nahas's resignation makes interesting reading. Nahas had more or less been thrust upon Faruk by Killearn's powerful diplomacy. Faruk was never happy with him. The King and the Prime Minister came into conflict on a number of occasions. The power of the people, which Nahas tried to enforce, clashed on several occasions with Faruk's conception of monarchy. Faruk had definite ideas of how a King should rule. Nahas also had ideas. The two did not agree.

When the danger of a German invasion of Egypt had passed, Britain was no more interested in the internal politics of Egypt. The King and his Prime Minister were, thereafter, left to iron out their differences in their own manner. One day Faruk went to an old mosque for prayer on one of the holy Moslem days. At the entrance to the mosque he found two banners. One read, 'LONG LIVE FARUK'. The other said, 'LONG LIVE NAHAS'. Faruk felt that there was one banner too many and ordered that the other should forthwith be removed. The official in charge of Securite was asked to do the needful and Faruk went into the mosque to pray.

The official in question rang up the Head of

the Police, who was faced with an odd dilemma. As the Head of the Police he was an employee of the Government and he had been ordered by the Head of the Government, Nahas, to erect the two banners. Now the King had ordered the removal of one. The Police Chief, therefore, suggested to the official that the Prime Minister should be rung up. So Nahas was rung up. Nahas said that the two banners should be left as they were. This cleared the Police Chief, but it made the position of the Securite official very awkward as he had received specific orders from the King to have the banner about Nahas removed. Soon the King would finish his prayers and come out of the mosque and he would find that his royal order had not been carried out. Under the circumstances, the Securite official decided to climb up the gates of the mosque and remove the offending banner, which he did.

When Faruk came out after prayers, he was pleased that his orders had been carried out. But when the Securite official returned to his office that day, he found a little chit on his desk. It was a note from Nahas which told him that he was fired. The dismissed official went to the King.

Faruk sent a note to Nahas saying that the dismissed Securite official was merely carrying out the King's orders and that he should be reinstated immediately. Nahas would not agree to do this. Faruk gave Nahas twenty-four hours to carry out the royal order. Finding himself in a quandary, Nahas went post-haste to the British Minister Resident asking him to patch up this quarrel between Nahas and the King. For the first time in Britain's chequered diplomatic history in Egypt, the British declined to



intervene saying that the matter was an internal one and that, under the circumstances, they could not interfere. Thereupon, Nahas suggested to Faruk that the Securite official could be reinstated by him in another better job. But Faruk was adamant. He said that the official must be reinstated in the same office from which he had been dismissed and later, if Nahas so wished, he could be promoted. The issue came to a head, the twenty-four hours expired and the first news Nahas heard of his 'resignation' was over the radio.

So Nahas went out of office and another Prime Minister took over.

I met Nahas Pasha for the first time in his beautiful villa in the Shariar Nabatat. It was odd that the house of a man who is of the land and of the people should have been so expensively furnished and even a trifle gaudy. I was taken to Nahas by the late Sir Amin Osman Pasha, who acted as an interpreter on this occasion. (Amin Osman was later killed by an assassin.)

At this interview, Nahas told me the story of Egypt's fight for freedom, which interested me as an Indian. In appearance, Nahas looked a dragoman. His face was like that of the traditional guide who escorted you round the pyramids. A missing front tooth accentuated his hard expression. His eyes were large and bulged from the sockets. He wore a perpetual smile which was mirthless. It was so like the smile on the Sphinx, arrogant, cynical and bitter.

Nahas was the backbone of the Waafd, the political party which the great Zaglul founded. The Waafd was the counterpart of the Congress in India. When Zaglul died in 1926, Nahas took over the

heritage of the Waafd. As Nahas told me the story of the Waafd and its long fight for democracy and freedom, I could not help noticing how strangely similar the aspirations of the Egyptian people were with ours.

‘The struggle of the Waafd,’ he said, ‘which began twenty-seven years ago, has not yet achieved its purpose. The Waafd stands where it did in 1918—for the freedom of Egypt from the domination of any foreign power. President Wilson laid down certain principles at that time and Egypt aspired to them. But we have not yet achieved a really democratic regime in Egypt. From time to time those who struggled with us have found the road too hard. So many have dropped out, but the spirit of the Waafd has not changed. The spirit is always there.’

He paused and repeated: ‘Men change but the spirit is always the same. It is like yeast which makes the bread rise.’

The Waafd was *practique*, Nahas made it clear. Its ideals were conditioned by circumstance, by immediate needs and limitations. It had not the abstract idealism of Gandhi’s non-violence.

Nahas saw the struggle clearly. At home, the burning question was whether the King should *rule* in the full sense of that term or whether he should govern within the limitations of a constitutional monarchy. With the outside world the struggle was for Egypt’s complete freedom without limitation, protection or reserve. It meant that not a single British soldier could remain on Egyptian soil.

Nahas had power with the masses. As he had risen from the common people, his reactions were instinctively those of the man-in-the-street. He was

not very cultured in the orthodox sense of the word, but like Gandhi he had an uncanny feeling about things. He could gauge correctly the pulse of the nation and the opportuneness of every political moment. Nahas talked more than he listened. It was typical of the self-assurance of the man.

There were stories told of him which illustrated his character and explained his hold over the ordinary people. Amin Osman told me after the interview, how in the days of El Alamein, when the lines were broken and there was almost nothing to stop the Germans from coming to the Nile Valley, the notables of Fayum, the province nearest the desert, came in panic to Nahas who received them in his office.

‘The lines are broken,’ they said to Nahas, ‘there is nothing to stop the Germans now. The British cannot hold them. Who will protect us now?’

Nahas did not falter. He replied : ‘Egypt is the land of God and God will never forsake it. Let us pray.’

And so right there in his office of Prime Minister, Nahas got up from his table and knelt with the men of Fayum and prayed. The men returned to their province fully convinced that there was no danger of an invasion. Nahas had assured them.

‘And even today,’ Amin Osman said, ‘these people really believe that Nahas knew all along that Egypt would never fall. They have an unbelievable faith in him. It is this faith of the common man in him which is his power.’

I never saw the King of Egypt for he was then

on a fishing trip. He was, from reports, a dashing young man in more senses than one. He had about half a dozen fast cars for his own personal use, in which he drove like fury all over Egypt and chiefly along the Avenue des Pyramids. Already he had been involved in a bad motor accident from which which he came out with no more damage than a broken finger. He was rushed to the British Military Hospital in Cairo, where he remained till he was out of danger. At the end of his recovery he conferred upon all the officers of the B.M.H. various grades of the Order of the Nile. Later the whole hospital was moved at the Egyptian government's expense, to another spot and in its place a mosque was built to commemorate Faruk's miraculous escape and recovery. The gorgeous Middle-East!

Nahas's successor was Ahmed Maher Pasha. He was then about 55/56 years of age, married and had one daughter. He was the brother of Ali Maher Pasha, a former Prime Minister of Egypt, who was later interned for pro-Axis sympathies. Ahmed Maher looked a bit like Sir Ghulam Hussein Hidayatullah. He was double-chinned. They said he once played quite a lot of baccarat but he stopped when he took on the office of Prime Minister. When I saw him in the Presidency of the Council of Ministers at Midan Lazogly, he appeared pleased with the results of the elections and I congratulated him. These were the elections which Nahas had asked the people to boycott, but Ahmed Maher pointed out that 25 per cent more voters had gone to the polls in this election

than in the previous one. Ahmed Maher said that this signified two things: 1. It was the people's response against the appeal of Nahas; 2. It was the feeling of the people that they could vote freely on this occasion.

I asked him: 'Were not the previous elections free?'

'In certain previous elections,' Ahmed Maher said, 'the police had been used to coerce the electors to vote in a way the Government of the day desired.' The remark was directed against Nahas, who according to Ahmed Maher, had sent 'a whole battalion to Girga in Upper Egypt with guns and even aeroplanes.' Likewise in Sharkia Province in Lower Egypt 'all the forces of the police had been used in local elections.' All this, Ahmed Maher maintained, was in spite of the fact that Nahas's party was the only party contesting.

Ahmed Maher was originally in the Waafdist Party. He left in 1937 when the third split in the Waafd took place and with him went Nokrash Pasha. Together they formed the Saadist Party. The name is taken from the first name of the great Saad Zaghlul Pasha, who founded the Waafd. Ahmed Maher was one of the signatories of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty. 'I signed it together with Nahas,' he said.

'But,' continued Ahmed Maher, 'I parted from the Waafd for three reasons. One, because of the nepotism in which the Waafd indulged—the putting of relatives into office. Two, because of the dictatorial policy of Nahas Pasha. Three, because of the use of the Government for personal gains.'

These are strong words, nor am I in a position to say how far they were justified.

Ahmed Maher stood for 'the complete independence of Egypt.' I drew attention to the fact that he had used the words 'complete independence' and asked in what ways it was now not complete. Ahmed Maher pointed out that the presence of British troops—except in wartime—though regularised by treaty, was nevertheless a fact which stood in the way of 'complete independence.' On the question of the Sudan, some permanent arrangement would also have to be reached. He pointed out that the Treaty provided for revision. He was confident that after the war Egypt would get its independence and 'that the British Government would realise it was in its own interests to have Egypt a free and friendly country.'

It was characteristic of the Egyptian Prime Minister that he often used words like 'hope' and 'believe'. They belong to the language of the days of Geneva, of an old world of diplomatic politeness, which had little meaning in modern hard-boiled world politics. But Ahmed Maher, Prime Minister of Egypt, was of the old world.

Ahmed Maher believed in the Atlantic Charter and spoke of 'the new spirit'. He said that the British had no imperialist aims in Egypt and so a solution should not be difficult. Britain merely wanted to guard its transit ways. The situation was different from India, he maintained, where Britain was in need of a market.

His insistence on the point that it would be in Britain's interest to let Egypt have complete independence, made me ask the obvious question, 'What if Britain does not see it that way? Suppose Britain judged its own interests differently from you, what then?'

'The country would naturally not be friendly,' he replied.

I tried to ascertain from him the exact significance of the somewhat vague term 'not friendly', especially as he had said he believed in speaking frankly. But I was unsuccessful. I put it to him that in case of any organised activity against the British being started after the war, what would his attitude be. The Prime Minister said emphatically that he 'would meet disorder with the same strong measures with which it had always been met, because Britain's friendship meant something to Egypt.' The logical sequence of these sentiments was difficult to follow.

In any case, it was amusing to find someone who believed in 'the new spirit' and who pinned his faith to the Atlantic Charter, when there was already so much doubt in the world as to whom the Charter applied.

Ahmed Maher was a well-read, cultured man. He was a professor before he became a politician. His manner of speaking—his use of his hands—was that of a pulpit preacher. He was kindly and gentle, and had all the old-world politeness which is fast dying in our times. But scholarship and politeness could not tackle the hard, modern politics which faced Egypt at that time.

Not many weeks after I left him, three shots ran through the corridors of the Parliament and Ahmed Maher Pasha, who had just read the declaration of war against Germany, fell. There he died, his daughter weeping at his side. Egypt mourned his loss and buried him in state.

Next morning another Pasha sat in the office at

Midan Lazogly. His name was Nokrashî. The Prime Ministers of Egypt have continued to change since then, but Nahas continues to remain in the wilderness.

That same afternoon I had a long friendly chat with Amin Osman. His college at Oxford was B.N.C. He was about 45 years of age when I saw him. His wife, Lady Amin Osman Pasha, was a cockney. He had a daughter, a beautiful cross-breed between East and West, who was doing an Arabic lesson when I called at their house. She spoke perfect English. Amin Osman's apartment was opposite the British public relations office. There was a strong French influence in his apartment to be noticed from his furniture. He smoked long Havana cigars and drank Dimple Scots Whiskey. Above his writing table was a picture of him doing a Palais Glide at a very English party. Amin Osman was a genial, able, shrewd and promising man. He had been Finance Minister in the Nahas Government.

Amin Osman explained to me why there were innumerable *Pashas* to be found in Egypt. *Pasha* was a title, Amin Osman explained. There were grades of titles in Egypt. In rising order, first there came *Effendi*. Next in order came *Bey*, of which there were two classes. 1. *Saheb el ezza*. 2. *Hadrat el ezza*. After that came a *Pasha* who was addressed as His Excellency, (*Son Excellence*). There were the various cordons or grades of *Pashas*. The tops in this grade was called the *Saheb el Makam El Rafia*.



This was a restricted order, something like the Order of the Garter in England. 'In fact, there were only five or six *Saheb el Makam El Rafia*,' Amin Osman said, with his delightful sense of humour, his tongue always in his cheek.

Amin Osman said that the real issue in Egyptian politics, apart from the issue of Egypt's independence, was woven around the Palace. The question was: Was the King to be a 'king of four hundred years ago, or a king of 1945?' He referred to the incidents which occurred between the King and Nahas. He pointed out that no Egyptian Parliament had ever upset a ministry, but at the same time, no Egyptian Parliament had ever lived its full term of five years.

Amin Osman had great faith in Nahas himself but not in the Wafd, for the Wafd had not yet formulated its policy. He said: 'Nahas has risen from down. His reaction is instinctively that of the man-in-the-street. He is not very intelligent but he has an uncanny feeling for things. Nahas talks more than he listens.'

Describing the fight between the King and Nahas in detail, Amin Osman said that in the two and a half years, during which Nahas was Prime Minister, the King had conferred titles without the Prime Minister's knowledge. Faruk was often absent from the seat of government without telling his Prime Minister. He had made appointments in the Senate without the Prime Minister's knowledge. He had refused Nahas's nomination for the office of Secretary of State.

The power behind the Palace was unknown. The Egyptian army was pro-king. But the peasant

did not have any preference. 'The peasant did not matter,' Amin Osman said. 'In France, revolutions always took place in Paris.'

Referring to Ahmed Maher's remark about Nahas sending a whole battalion at the time of election, Amin Osman said: 'Ask him why three thousand men were sent to Kena in this election when the Minister of Finance was opposed by a local candidate, who was a former Chief Judge and, therefore, a very respectable man?'

From all this contradiction of Egyptians by each other, I gathered that much could be said against both sides and very little for either. Egypt was at the stage, as in India, when power was falling into the hands of whatever local parties could grab it first. But (also as in India) there was that something which was non-vocal and inarticulate, which was moving gradually but surely towards democracy, which Lincoln had defined as a government of the people, by the people, for the people.

Amin Osman next talked about the Wafd. The emotion behind the Wafd, like the emotion behind the Indian National Congress, was beautiful in thought and ideal, even though, in terms of hard politics, it did not work out so smoothly. The history of the Wafd, as Amin Osman interpreted it to me, was the gradual dropping off of the weak. In 1900 Mustapha Kemal (not to be confused with the Attaturk) formed the Nationalist Party. In 1918, at the end of the World War, Saad Zaghlul formed the Wafd. The word 'Wafd' means 'Delegation'. The first split in the Wafd came when the 'Liberals' broke away from the main body of the Wafd. The Liberals were content to take a piece of the

cake, while those who remained in the Wafd wanted all. In 1926, the Great Zaghlul died and Nahas inherited the leadership of the Wafd. In 1933 there came the second split in the party, when on an important issue the voting was 8 to 6. The significant thing was that it was the majority of 8 that left the Wafd and the minority of 6, which included Nahas, that remained in possession of the Wafd. Others, who are included in the 6, were Ahmed Maher, Nokrashy and Mukram the Kopt. In 1937 there came another split when Ahmed Maher and Nokrashy were dismissed by Nahas and they went out to form the Saadi Party. In 1942 Mukram was dismissed and formed the Waafdist bloc. So that only Nahas remained, but where Nahas was, there still was to be found the heart and soul of the Wafd.

The government in power in Egypt at the time I was there, was composed of the Liberals, the Saadis, the Waafdist bloc, Mukram and the national of Mustapha Kemal. These grouped themselves under the name of the 'Oppositionists' which was significant because it proved Nahas's positiveness in terms of modern Egypt. It was odd to think that the government of Egypt called themselves 'The Oppositionists', merely because they were in opposition to Nahas Pasha.

When I finished the interview with Amin Osman, during which I drank his Dimple Scots and smoked his beautifully mild Havana cigars, I told him that he would never become Prime Minister. He knew too much.

Amin Osman laughed. 'Maybe you are right,' he said. Some months later he died at an assassin's hands.

In between the interviews, I would allow myself the luxury of buying *marron glace* at Groppi's in Suleiman Pasha. Sometimes I would go to have tea at Meena House with Claire and Marc Najar. Meena House was a delightful hotel, which reminded me of Branksome Towers at Bournemouth. The drive to it was along the Avenue des Pyramids, which was lined with pretty villas. This was the spot where Churchill, Roosevelt and Chiang Kai-Shek had stayed when they came to the Cairo Conference. One of the beautiful villas on this Avenue was Faruk's lesser known residences. Somewhere on this road was the Auberge des Pyramids, that delightful eating house where I often gorged myself on spaghetti and chicken liver. There was a lovely Spanish villa on the Avenue which was a particular favourite of mine. I would often pull up the car in front of this villa and yearn to possess it. In the background stood the Pyramids, immobile, majestic and aloof, reminding one of a civilisation which, though dead, still lingered in the memory of man. The winter sky was a blue-grey against which, in darker relief, stood rows of eucalyptus trees. Around the Spanish villa, which I liked so much, were sheaves of corn and wheat. It made a strange blending of gold and green as one saw only in a Dutch landscape.

One day I was standing on the balcony of a house in Gezira, a suburb of Cairo. It overlooked a well-trimmed garden of the late Lord Moyne's house. Across the way was the Sporting Club of Gezira, where the ponies raced, and on the other side

there was a little strip of the Nile on which pleasure steamers rested.

Here, not long ago, Lord Moyne, the Minister-Resident in the Middle-East, had met his tragic death. And as I looked at the scene of that tragedy, I thought of the two Jewish youths who were then standing their trial for the murder of Lord Moyne. They were members of the Stern Group. Moyne's assassination was not a personal but a political incident, involving ideologies, however misguided, and aspirations and deep-felt loyalties.

My mind went back to the last war, when in the year of 1917, Allenby advanced into Palestine and entered Jerusalem in September. At the end of the war, therefore, the Turks had lost Palestine, which became one of the spoils of victory.

Doctor James Parkes, an authority on the Jewish question, explains in his little Oxford pamphlet, the importance of Palestine to Britain, and the British attitude at the end of the Great War. Parkes says: 'British security demanded the control of the east bank of the canal; the development of imperial air communications made Palestine a potential link in lines to India and the Far East; the motor road across the desert to Baghdad could be reached from the country, and one end of the oil pipe-line from the Iraqi wells at Kirkuk debouched at the Palestinian port of Haifa, which was one of the naval stations in the Eastern Mediterranean. Such is the basic British interest in the country, an interest analogous to those which, in the past, have led to the British control of Gibraltar, Malta or Singapore. It is a vital link in the communications of a world-wide Empire and Britain

cannot be indifferent to its fate. In the old days she might simply have annexed the country after her conquest. In actual fact, she obtained it after the war as a Mandate from the League of Nations.'

The trouble, therefore, began with the sprinkling of the League's holy water over a relationship which was nothing more than an ordinary common-or-garden rape. It was like trying to give a Cathedral wedding to Lady Chatterly and her lover.

It was Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a Manchester lecturer in bio-chemistry, a Polish Jew by birth, settled in England, who first moved the British 'conscience' on Palestine. Weizmann was a friend of Charles Prestwich Scott, then editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. Scott knew Lloyd George, who in turn introduced Weizmann to Lord Balfour. The result of these introductions was the Balfour Declaration, which was later embodied in the League Mandate.

The relevant part of the Declaration ran as follows :

'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for Jewish people ; and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, IT BEING CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.'

There are two important points which arise from the wording of the Declaration. In the first place the words used are 'the *establishment* in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.' The wording clearly denies to the Jews any previous legal

or historic claim. The words which were originally suggested by the Jewish representatives were: 'The *reconstruction* of the national home of the Jewish people.'

Secondly, the most important safeguard which is often forgotten by Jewish spokesmen is that which follows the words IT BEING CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD. In other words the Balfour Declaration had made it abundantly clear that nothing shall be done to prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing inhabitants of Palestine, the large majority of whom are Arabs.

Jewish national opinion, Zionism, interpreted the Declaration entirely to suit the political and national aims of the Jews. The more extremist elements in Zionism claimed that Palestine should be 'as Jewish as England is English.'

Let us examine this extreme form of Jewish nationalism, of which the Stern Group is the most aggressive. In an editorial, the London *Times* gave on November 15th, 1943, a background of the events that led to this extremist Zionism. 'The rise of Jewish terrorism in Palestine is due to the belief firmly held by certain sections of the younger Jews hailing from Central and Eastern Europe, that assassination and sabotage are the only weapon by which Britain can be forced to abandon the White Paper of 1939 and make Palestine 'as Jewish as England is English'!

The *Times* continued: 'The militarization of Jewish youth, originally in response to Arab attacks on isolated Jewish settlements, has now been proceeding for some years; and side by side with the 'respectable' military groups there have grown up a

number of secret societies wholly dedicated to the 'strong arm' methods. Among them is IRGUN ZVI LEUMI (National Military Organization) which, at the outbreak of the present war, announced a truce with the Government in opposition to Hitler. But about 1940, the Fascist-minded Abraham Stern led the secession from the IZL and embarked upon a campaign of terrorism, partly with the object of obtaining funds for more vigorous action. The Stern Group sought aid from Italy, with which country it was in touch. The activities of the gang reached a climax in January 1942 with the cold-blooded murder of three Police officers and the wounding of four others. A round-up of its members followed. Stern himself, with two other leading terrorists met death in endeavouring to escape. But in October 1943, some 20 members of the gang broke out from their confinement in Palestine and the activities of the gang were resumed. Both Irgun Zvi Leumi and the Stern gang aim at the immediate establishment, by violence, of a Jewish State which is to include all Palestine, and Irgun, no longer willing to co-operate with Britain in any respect, has for some time been committed to a policy of sabotage.'

That is the sort of background of the Jewish problem to which must be added the White Paper of 1939, wherein Britain maintained its consistent attitude of denying to the Jews the political status which they demanded for themselves in Palestine, notwithstanding the rights of those who were there before the Mandate. The White Paper laid down that for the next five years, i.e., from 1939, the immigration of Jews into Palestine would be 75,000 to be spread over those five years, after which there



would be no further immigration without the consent of the Arabs. On the question of the meaning of 'a national home', the White Paper said: '...H. M's Government, therefore, now declare unequivocally that it is not part of their policy that Palestine should become a Jewish State. They would regard it as contrary to their obligations to the Arabs under the Mandate, as well as to the assurances which have been given to the Arab people in the past, that the Arab population of Palestine should be the subjects of a Jewish State against their will.'

The Jews, however, have resurrected a historic claim to the land of their fathers. They say that Palestine belonged to them in the first place and that it should be returned to them. They present this claim to a country (Britain) who only can restore that right to the Jews because of the right vested in Britain and the League by reason of Palestine's conquest in the last war. Says the Jew: 'If the British who conquered Palestine do not claim it by occupation, then it must come to us, for it was ours in the first place.' The Arab says: 'If the British do not take the place, then we were the last occupants and our right to Palestine is more recent than that of the Jews.' And the British say: 'We really don't want Palestine because it is a God-forsaken hole, but it's on the way and quite near the things we want, so let us at least have a mandate over it, so that no one else can obstruct our route.'

So there arises in Palestine a problem. As Dr. Parkes says: 'The essential basis for understanding the situation is the realization of two points. The clash in Palestine is a single expression of the general clash between East and West. The Jewish

settlers are Europeans ; Jewish standards of life are western, Jewish achievements are based on the technical skill and knowledge of American and European science. The Arabs are still Eastern ; their development proceeds much more slowly ; they can still be swayed by blind religious fanaticism ; in free competition with the Jews they fear that they would have no chance. Secondly it must be realized that to a very large extent each of the three parties concerned has perfectly legitimate reasons for acting as it has done. It is futile to explain the behaviour of any entirely or even mainly in terms of malice or selfishness.'

No fairer presentation of the problem could be found, for in self-defence all three parties—British, Arabs, Jews—have an interest in Palestine ; a genuine, legitimate interest which makes it difficult for anyone to apportion the Holy Land. The British need it as a safeguard to the Empire's Lines of Communication ; the Jew needs it because the rest of the world has denied him a country ; the Arab needs it because he has been there since the last occupation.

Let us look at the problem of Palestine from the point of view of the local Arab population. At the time of the Balfour declaration the Arab formed 93 per cent of the population. Some of the more enlightened members of the Arab world had been led to believe—mistakenly, it now appears—that Palestine was included in the McMahon letters to Sheif Hussein, in which independence was promised to the Arabs to instigate them to revolt against Turkey. The British say this was not the case. Even so, the fact remains that Arab protests about settling

Jews in Palestine were completely neglected by the British Government at the time of obtaining the Mandate. 'They were flatly told,' Dr. Parkes says, 'that they could not be allowed even that measure of self-government allowed the other Arab States, because of the promises made to the Jews.'

Today the Arabs find that while the Jew has in many ways improved Palestine as a country, the chances are that with increased improvements and by reason of the advantages he has over the Arab, the Jew will have all Palestine and that the Arab will be reduced to second place. The Jew has two things the Arab does not possess to the same extent; the Jew has brains, the Jew has money. Rightly says the Jew, 'If I buy waste land and cultivate it, if I take a country which is nearly barren and turn it into an orchard in which grow the richest fruits of the earth, surely I must have the feeling that the country for which I sweat and toil and in which I invest my money belongs to me. From other countries in the world, where I have worked and sweated, I have found in my old age that I have been chucked out. So I want a country now and if you say you are going to give us a national home in Palestine, well give it all to us.'

There is no question that the Jew has changed the face of Palestine. He has brought to it all the benefits of modern science. He has tilled the soil and made it rich and fertile. The experimental farms, worked on the socialist principle of co-operative ownership have proved a great success. And not only the soil; for with his flare for commerce and industry, several arts and crafts have been started in Palestine, which will offer competition in

the free markets of the world. In Cairo, as I walked along the most fashionable street, the Kasr-el-Nil, I saw the shop windows full of the most exquisite merchandise. At Challon's there were woollen dresses for women, overcoats, dressing gowns which were as good as any of the ware which came from the shops of Sulka and Charve, before the war. At the Carnival de Venise they made me a shirt, better than which I have never had. All these goods come from Palestine. If Cairo was the market of the Mid-East, Palestine was surely its industrial heart.

Considering the great advance the Jew has made, the Arab naturally feels a little nervous. He is glad the Jew is there, but he is afraid of losing all his land. 'Better to have my land untilled than to have it fertile and plentiful and lose it all,' the Arab says.

To me the problem of Palestine appeared insoluble. I failed to see how two such different stages of civilisation and two people so different in temperament, could live side by side in harmony.

Others took a different view. Sir Arthur Wauchope, a former High Commissioner of Palestine, has a strange faith in Islam when he says: 'During the ten years I spent in Iraq and in Palestine, whenever I saw the dome of a village mosque, I felt I saw something that guards a noble tradition; when I heard the prayer of the muezzin come strong and insistent from a village minaret at dawn or dusk, I heard something that called on men to live up to a certain standard of conduct, to remember spiritual things, rather than material.'

That was the faith of a British High Commissioner. To my more realistic way of thinking, I

was a little overwhelming and, as a result, I was soon on my way to my hotel in the town of Naples. I got a good room and later ran into Colonel Kirkness of Indian Public Relations, with whom I propped up the bar for a drink.

About an hour later the Turkish Ambassador arrived at the hotel. He was fuming. Tactful enquiries revealed that although he was a V.I.P. the usual attention paid to V.I.P.s had not been paid him at the air-port of Naples. The truth was that, due to some defect in the cipher system, my name had got mixed up with his, which was Tarara, and I had, therefore, unwittingly deprived him of his diplomatic privileges. I confess now I was not altogether unaware that something like this had happened.

With Kirkness I drove to Rome. The morning I left by jeep, the sun was peering through the clouds, after many wet and bitterly cold days. Two main highways led to the capital city of Rome, of which we took Highway number 6, which passed through the town of Cassino. Here, on the peak of Monte Cassino, stood the famous monastery of Saint Benedict, which had guarded for over 500 years the cultural tradition of that order which was enshrined within its walls. At the foot of the monastery and on the slopes of Castle Hill, there had stood houses which several generations of Italians had built through the ages as landmarks of their progressing civilization. But as our jeep came to the approaches of Cassino, the hill itself was covered in mist.

On Cassino's debris-covered soil, there now lay pink and orange rubble and over it all, there

had spread like a shroud, the memory of some thousands of men who had perished in the taking of this great bastion of Fascism, which lay on the road to Rome. We slowed down the jeep to a crawling pace. It felt like following in a funeral procession.

Not far from the road there were clusters of neat, white, wooden crosses over the graves of those whose mangled bodies had been recovered from this unholy mess and identified and buried.

Of Cassino, a Russian General on a visit to the Italian Front before the battle of Cassino was fought, had said: 'You must not attack with a brigade. You want to put in a whole group of armies.'

A group of armies could not be spared for an attack on a single town. So the price was paid to break through an enemy who shielded behind the massive walls of the monastery. Twice had the Eighth Army, under Montgomery, directed by the genius which was Alexander, tried to take Cassino and twice it had turned back beaten by the Boche.

The German password at Cassino was 'murder'. From the monastery walls, the Germans spoke the language of a total war, punctuating their sentences with the heavy fire which came upon the Eighth Army from the vantage point on the hill, which the Germans held. The Christian saint, Saint Benedict, must have turned in his grave at seeing his shrine polluted and transformed into a powder magazine for Nazi Germany. But for the Germans the monastery had no sacred meaning. They had no respect for religion nor any respect for the laws of international warfare which forbade the

use of a church as an artillery base. The monastery made a natural citadel for them and the Germans had no scruples in using it as such.

It was then that the Allied High Command took the decision to dive-bomb the monastery. Planes of the Strategic Air Force swooped down on various points on Cassino Hill until there was very little left of the monastery or of the town.

When I saw Cassino, it lay in complete ruins, in grim utter desolation, silent and motionless. Rubble was sprinkled over the bare hill formation, relieved by the stumps of trees, which stuck out like pin-heads. There was just a mere suggestion of a former habitation to be gathered from the odd walls which were left standing, from odd articles of household furniture, such as a twisted iron bed, which stuck out of scrap-heaps on the roadside.

In the courtyard of the monastery, the statue of Saint Benedict still stood, though the head and left arm had been broken off. At the foot of the statue was the grave of a little Italian boy, who was killed during the early bombing. Cassino was no more and though plans have been made for its rebuilding and the rebuilding of the monastery—at American expense—I knew it would never be the same again.

There are a lot of people, naturally inclined to be sentimental about old landmarks. They weep over broken stones. To me it seemed more important that we should weep rather for those broken homes, from which some gallant Allied soldier went on this bloody pilgrimage only to make it his lasting grave.

I stayed in Rome at the Hotel De La Ville in the Via Sistina. The Hotel was requisitioned for war correspondents. Its location was beautiful, for it overlooked the Piazza de Espaniole. But all Rome was beautiful as it lay before me, a city of seven hills, reminding one of an age which was passed, but of which the glory had never died. Perhaps it was difficult to find that glory then, as I saw it scarred by war, its people hungry, tired and beaten.

Some people believed that when Italy lost the war and shook off the Fascist yoke, its troubles were over. In effect the results of the war were only just beginning to be felt. The large reserves of food which had been built up before the war had dwindled and what was left, the Germans had taken away. The cost of living had soared beyond all expectations, leaving the Italian people a little bewildered, uncertain of their daily meal. Abnormal prices, coupled with the stabilization of the lira at 400 to the pound sterling, had thrown out of gear the whole economy of the middle and the working class, and of the peasant.

In a grim fight for survival the weak had been pushed off by the smart black-marketeers. The only sure commodity which the people got was 200 grams of bread daily. Ration coupons existed for other food stuffs, such as meat and eggs, but the coupons were useless for they could not be exchanged for food. A certain family in Rome showed me coupons of several months which had been unused. They had seen no meat for a long time. Sugar and milk were not available. Meat, when obtainable, was at a ridiculously high price, roughly ten shillings a pound. Spaghetti, which was once the staple diet



of the Italians, was twenty shillings a pound. Eggs were about thirty shillings a dozen. Fish was almost a novelty.

As Luigi, the famous restaurateur, who owned the Hotel de La Ville, said to me: 'The people see food as often as they see the sun shine.' In the absence of normal markets, the black market had become the only market in which food was available. It did not operate stealthily but in the open, with the full knowledge of all the authorities concerned.

The price of clothes was not often discussed. Clothes were far beyond the reach of the average man. Until 1939, the best tailored suit made of the best English material, at the best shop in Rome would cost 800 lire. But when I was in Rome, an ordinary suit, made of the most ordinary thin woollen material, was priced at 30,000 lire, (roughly eighty pounds).

Cigarettes were rationed at thirty per week for every man over eighteen. For some obscure reason women were not allowed a ration of cigarettes. To balance the sharp rise in prices, there was no corresponding rise in the wage-earning capacity of the people. There was no employment to speak of. Only the more fortunate Italians worked for the Allies. There was no industry because most of the industrial plants had been razed to the ground by continual Allied bombing. The Alpha Romeo Factory at Naples had nothing left of it except the stumps of walls. Elsewhere in Italy, when a factory had escaped the bombing, it was found that there was no raw material available with which to work it. There was little commerce, for there was

nothing to sell. Shops in Rome still hung on to what little they had, hoping the Allied personnel would pay prices which were profitable to the local population.

Signs of malnutrition could be seen on the faces of the people. According to available statistics, 65 per cent of the children under one year had died because of lack of nutrition. With malnutrition came disease. On the road from Naples to Caserta, there were signs stuck on trees which warned Allied personnel to be careful of lice which carried typhus germs. Tuberculosis was fast mounting, aggravated by the inclement weather, which was the coldest for many years, and by the lack of clothing. People who had sold their blankets during the summer in order to buy food, found themselves without a covering in the bitter cold.

In Abruzzo, 65 miles south of the front-line, winter conditions were shocking. Bitter fighting, which had taken place earlier, had left the people often without a roof over their heads. Like Cassino, many little towns and villages had been completely wiped out, but some of its people were still there. It was sad to see naked children shivering like trembling leaves in a storm. It was the aftermath of war.

My predominating feeling at being in Rome was that I was among a people who were conscious of their defeat. It was not only a military defeat, but a moral defeat also. A general moral degradation had set in. Although Rome was untouched by war in the physical sense—in as much as most buildings, except the railway station, were left intact—the normal life of the people had been shattered. The

newer generation did not feel this so much, but the humiliation was clearly to be seen in the faces of the older people. They were more sensitive to defeat.

Among the war correspondents in Rome at that time, was Gene Rea, an Italian born American who wrote, among others, for the American *Mercury*. Rea, who wore a handsome, well-groomed short beard, explained to me the internal political situation arising out of the defeat of the Fascists and the coming of the Allied Military Government.

The first point Rea made was that the British were supporting the Italian King against the wishes of the people, 90 per cent of whom were against the regime after Mussolini's downfall. The Army generals were pro-king but the army was not. The only real royalists left in Italy were the nobility and the hierarchy of the Italian clergy.

Rea told me that before Mussolini's march on Rome (October 20th, 1922) had commenced, Badoglio had told the King that he could smash Mussolini. The King was afraid of a Leftist revolt and wanted no bloodshed. (Rea also said that Mussolini never 'marched' on Rome. He came by train. He met the marchers at a certain point.) After this Badoglio remained in the background until Mussolini put him in command in Abyssinia when De Bono failed. Badoglio was made a General. He was a strong monarchist, but vis-a-vis Fascism, he preferred to stay in the background. In 1936 Badoglio became a member of the Fascist Party. Mussolini made him Viceroy of Ethiopia and gave him tremendous grants of lands. Badoglio and the professional army did not want to get involved in World War II.

On July 25th, 1942, soon after the Sicilian landings, Mussolini was voted out of power. His own son-in-law, Count Ciano, had voted against him. It was then that the King asked Badoglio to form a government, which Badoglio did. Badoglio's mistake was that, against the wish of the people, he declared: 'The war continues'. Ciano was killed in 1944 by the Fascists of Northern Italy, who regarded him as a traitor to their Duce and to Fascism. It is alleged that he was bumped off under Mussolini's instructions. Ciano, however, did not support the armistice even though he had voted Mussolini out of power.

This was the background and the setting of Italian politics before the Allied invasion.

The British, when they came to Italy, supported the Bonomi government. This came about in the following way. The Allied Commission went to the Committee of Italian (National) Liberation, which was made up of six anti-Fascist underground parties. Bonomi was a former Prime Minister of Italy, as far back as 1921, the year before the march on Rome. Bonomi was voted out of power by the Committee of Italian Liberation and offered his resignation to Prince Umberto, who was then Lieutenant of the Realm—the nominal head of 'The Royal Government.' Then came the Sforza incident. The British had interfered in the internal politics of the Italians.

There were a few other incidents which made the Italians untrustful of Britain and uncertain of Britain's intentions. The British had objected at the time of the Armistice to the formation of an Italian army, yet later two Italian divisions were fighting with the Eighth Army. They were not

actually 'fighting', they were in charge of duty lines. Likewise Anthony Eden had made it quite clear in his speech at the House of Commons that Italian Colonies would not be returned.

There appeared to be a similarity between Britain's policy towards Italy and towards Greece. Britain, under Churchill, was afraid of Russian influence spreading over Europe, chiefly in the Balkans. Churchill's 'precautionary measures' were always in evidence. He appeared to have met with no opposition in Italy, for Italy was 'liberated' by the Allies. But the test case was in Greece which had been self-liberated, so to speak. I often found it difficult to understand the administration of the Allied Military Government in Italy, or to understand why Allied Military currency flaunted the four freedoms to them, when it was quite obvious that none of these freedoms were possible or available to the Italian people. The result was that the Italians began to expect things, which, as a defeated ex-enemy nation, they should have had no justification to expect.

As the war in Europe was drawing to a close, other problems were fast coming to a head. These problems were economic and social. On the one side there were the forces of capitalism and individualism, and on the other those of socialism, which believed in state-ownership and state control. In this dog-fight which was to spread all over the world, even the head of the Catholics, the Pope, had shown his preferences. In his speech at Christmas 1944, the Pope said that he was against the infringement of 'the sacred rights of private ownership.' Why the Pope had to meddle in politics I do not

quite understand. Nor could I see why His Holiness had sanctified and made sacred the rights of private ownership. The preference which the Pope showed for capitalism and vested interests was, to my heathen mind, a little unfortunate.

There had been quite a difference in the British attitude towards Italy since the occupation. I remember the various broadcasts of Colonel Britton and how, to his signature tune of three dots and a dash, he had urged the Italian people to revolt against Fascism. In Colonel Britton's broadcasts, the Italian people were always 'good people.' Again, Churchill had always placed the blame of the war on Mussolini alone, saying: 'One man and one man alone is responsible.' In November 1944, Churchill changed his mind and tune, for there was no longer any need to appeal to the Italian people, who were conquered, or if you prefer it, 'liberated.' Churchill now said: 'The Italian people cannot entirely be held irresponsible.'

It was difficult for us, war correspondents, to understand what the position of Italy was. It was even more difficult for the Italians to understand the attitude of their liberators. The Italian only understood the degradation of his family and his people. In the day he was pushed off the side-walks, on which Allied soldiers strutted as if they owned the place. At nights he saw his liberators stop on the main streets and relieve themselves of the beer of which they had drunk too much.

'It makes me sick,' Lionel Fielden said to me one day, as we were walking up the side streets of the Via Veneto one moonlit evening and his eyes had caught sight of the trickle along the pavements.

It was nice to see Lionel again. I had first met him in India when he ran the All India Radio. I next heard of him as Editor of the *Sunday Observer*, which he quitted, apparently because there was too much interference from the Astors. It was said that on Monday he would have a note from the peer himself, telling him what his next editorial should be. On Tuesday, Lady Astor would send him her views. On Wednesday he would have a note from Astor, Jr. and on Saturday Lionel would write something completely different. The Astors wanted emphasis on military subjects, to which Lionel, inherently artistic by temperament would not agree. So Lionel was out of the *Observer* and when I saw him he was in charge of Public Relations of the Allied Military Commission in Italy.

It was Lionel who began the India service of the B.B.C. He had told the B.B.C. a long while ago that they would have to start a service for India, but the B.B.C., stodgy as they were in those days, were reluctant. Then Japan began to spout propaganda at India so the B.B.C. had to step in.

Brasshats in India and those who lived in cellophane and red-tape did not like Lionel. Once he was called by the Viceroy and ticked off for what he had written on an office file. It was the file which began with an ordinary office note requesting the Finance Department to sanction expenditure for new uniforms for the sepoys of All India Radio. As it went round the usual rounds of offices in New Delhi, gathering quite unnecessary opinions of various officials and departments, it grew into a file of abnormal proportions. Then it came back to Lionel, as head of All India Radio, for his final

comment. Lionel wrote : 'The answer to all this is a pair of globular objects.'

New Delhi could not stomach such a comment on an office file. Hell, you could say that sort of thing in the gymkhana bar, but not on a Government of India file !

One day I drove with Kirkness to Florence. We took Route 1 as far as Grosseto, then switched over to Route 73; due north via Siena. As we were going up the winding road towards Siena, we saw Sikh sappers working on the side of the hill. The snow had newly fallen and though it was bitterly cold, the weather was delightful and stimulating. The Sikhs, with their boards, stood out against the background of white. We stopped our transport and I went up to a group of them and started speaking to one of them in Hindustani. A smile broke on his face and he turned to the others and said, 'Amazing how well he speaks our language.'

'Why amazing?' I asked.

'Italians do not usually speak Hindustani so well.'

That was a blow but I knew that if I told him that I was a countryman of his, he would not believe it. So I left him believing I was an Italian, even though it hurt.

It was pitch dark when we arrived at Florence after our nine-hour drive. We stayed at the Excelsior, a beautiful hotel, centrally heated. There was music in the lounge that evening and there were American and British officers in abundance. We



drank Cianti with dinner and finished up with a few Stregas with our coffee.

I had come to Florence for an interview with General Mark W. Clark, Commanding General of the 15th Army Group. Amidst the woods on the outskirts of Florence, the ground snow-covered and surrounded by what looked like Christmas trees, was the masonite tent of the 48-year-old, then three-star General. There was warmth in that spotlessly clean, simply furnished tent—a warmth I felt when I shook hands with him. He was the first operational American General I had met.

Mark Clark was directly under Alexander's over-all Mediterranean command. He rose to the command of the 15th Army Group because of the spectacular manner in which he had led the Fifth Army, which came up the hard way to Rome, leaving its mark on every milestone of the road. To the Fifth Army, Clark said: 'You have been privileged to make history. You have taken the eternal city. You have done what the forces of Hannibal failed to do. You have captured Rome from the South. You are liberators, not conquerors. You came to this sacred spot to drive out the enemy. You did so gallantly and effectively. All Rome welcomed you.'

General Clark now commanded two armies, the Fifth and the Eighth, which constituted the 15th Army Group. The slogging through slush, rain and snow to establish Allied line from the Adriatic above Ravenna to the west coast of Italy near Massa, could not have been achieved without diversion from orthodox tradition.

If the armies of Napoleon marched on their stomachs, those of General Clark marched on

their stomachs but in a different sense. In no other way could they have cracked through Althuzza, the guts of the Gothic Line, pitching for nine solid months against concrete 'pill-boxes' and mines and against an enemy which used mountainous terrain as a natural power and in weather which for many months stank, and in which lines of communications were difficult to maintain. This was no 'soft under-belly of Europe', which was Mr. Churchill's phrase. This was granite behind which stood an enemy of steel. But all this was left behind as he sat in a snug-fitting open-neck shirt, relieved by a green scarf round the neck and three simple five-point stars on his collar. The beaches of Paestum and Salerno to which Fifth Army gave battle baptism on September 9th, 1943 lay far behind. There was no noise or trace of shot and shell that morning in Florence and even the snow falling gently on the tent roof did not disturb the pervading quiet.

Under General Clark had fought the 4th, the 8th and the 10th Indian divisions. Clark said to me: 'Although they have a reputation for being deliberate, I find they move as fast as anything else.' He told me about the situation in the Serchio Valley, where the enemy had brought pressure. 'We sent the bulk of the Eighth Indian Division there. They held part of the line and helped to stop the German offensive. This is not generally known but I don't see why credit should not go the 8th Indian Division by name. Put it in. We'll release it.' He paid a handsome compliment to the Eighth Indian Division, saying, 'I feel that if we had not had the Indians, there might have been a serious situation.'

As we were talking, his dog, a black, shiny-coated cocker spaniel came and sat beside him. General Clark bent over and patted him. The dog's name was 'Pal' and on his green leather collar belt, the dog wore the insignia of the Fifth Army.

Florence was beautiful that winter, and as I looked out from my hotel window I could see the strip of water in front of it and then the city as it lay covered in snow, for it was snowing hard all the time. Little Italian boys, unconcerned about the war, were innocently playing with snow balls in the Piazza outside the Cathedral. They were unaware of the great danger of shoe mines, which the Germans had planted haphazardly in great quantities all over the place. Florence was part of an old world and it seemed almost a sacrilege to see this venerable city, dating back many hundreds of years, covered with military tents. Yet, somehow, the sight of soldiers in uniform was not so incongruous if one regarded the war as a crusade. Florence made an ideal background for crusaders. Its Gothic buildings and its spires created a strangely religious atmosphere, which I had found lacking elsewhere in the war. The atmosphere of Florence had permeated into the hearts of the men who had come over to fight in an otherwise bloody war.

From Florence, we drove to Pisa, where I saw for the first time the Leaning Tower. A definite effort had been made by the Allies to save such historic places. Allied bombing had been deadly accurate. Industrial and military plants had been

wiped out and yet nearby buildings, houses, cathedrals and churches had been left untouched.

We were on our way that day to the Bagni San Guiliano, where the Eighth Indian Division was resting after an important operation in Serchio Valley. Bagni San Guiliano was, as the name implied, the bathing place named after Saint Guiliano. It nestled by the side of a lake in the most delightful setting I have ever seen. As we drove towards it, I could hear the music of bagpipes. Our jeep entered the town-square, which was called Piazza Garibaldi. The square was full of Pathans doing their traditional folk dances. They were dressed in their traditional balloon pyjamas. They wore white *kurtas* in place of shirts. They flaunted colourful scarves round their necks. Their long hair, over which they wore no turban, bobbed up and down as they danced. The village people had gathered round the square, for the music and the dancing was a welcome change from the grimness of war. Little Italian children sat on the knees of *jawans* and were eating candy.

We first drove to the Officer's Mess of one of the battalions, where we had tea. Then we drove to the ornate villa of a former Lloyd Triestino agent, which was now the temporary H. Q. of the Division and the residence of its commanding general, General Russell, more familiarly known as Russell Pasha. General Russell looked a '*koi-hai*' type, but he was a most charming person. Belying his gruff exterior, which was somewhat Blimpish, he was most human, both as a general and even as a Blimp. I suggested to him that as a gesture, his Division should give a token gift of five hundred rupees to the Kasturbai Fund which had been

recently started to commemorate the memory of Mahatma Gandhi's wife. The idea appealed to him but the mechanics to put it into operation were difficult. If he could have done it, he would.

This villa, though situated beautifully and modernly built, was obviously the house of a *nouveau-riche* Italian. It was gaudily decorated—a little arty, I thought. But in the back-garden, in severe contrast to the interior of the house, there stood some twenty or twenty-five black crosses, which marked German graves. The swastika was on most of them and as I read the names and ages of the men who lay buried there, I noticed how many of them were under twenty. Often, from my bedroom window I would look upon the solemn, sombre row of black crosses and in that silent moment I would understand more clearly the meaning of war. Yet in that same back-garden little Italian children played while the graves with black crosses looked on.

We drove back via Leghorn or Livirnio, as the Italians call it, and Grosseto, along the coastline between Pisa and Leghorn. Old residences, like feudal estates, dotted the coastline. They were the mansion houses of the Italian gentry, the landmarks of days gone by. I was dog-tired by the time I returned to Rome.

On Sunday morning, delightfully sunny after several cold days, I went to St. Peter's. The slum houses in front had been cleared to make a long and impressive drive to the cathedral. The work which was begun by Mussolini was still unfinished. Lionel Fielden told me that formerly St. Peter's was encircled by little lanes, a setting more suitable to it than the present one. He also described to

me how the courtyard of the cathedral was packed with the liberators of Rome on the first Christmas day after liberation, and how the Pope came on the balcony and gave the kneeling crowd his benediction. I could feel that emotion as Lionel described the scene of men humbled in prayer.

As I entered St. Peter's there was, on the right, Michael Angelo's classic statue of the Madonna and the dead Christ. Its chiselling was exquisitely delicate. The Madonna was portrayed very young, accentuating her virginity. Nearby there was the column on which Christ was said to have leant when preaching.

There was a mass service in progress when I entered the cathedral. The organ was playing and I could hear voices coming from behind it as if the angels were singing. Yet more than the colour and ceremony of St. Peter's, it was the assortment of men and women who knelt side by side, their heads bowed in prayer, their hands clasped in reverence, that was so impressive. Men in uniform looked particularly fine on bended knees.

A guide was conducting a party of troops. He stood in front of St. Peter's statue, wiped one foot with a handkerchief and then kissed it as was the custom. Lionel used the word 'disinfect' to describe the wiping. In the centre of the cathedral was Peter's tomb where his body was buried. St. Peter's head, however, was buried elsewhere. Above the tomb, as one looked up at the ceiling, the pattern of mosaic looked beautifully symmetrical. The most impressive single item in the cathedral was a statue, I think of St. Paul, pointing a finger towards St. Peter's seat. Over it a dove sat.

The cathedral appeared empty, only because of its vastness. It was difficult to say which was more attractive—the outer crust of aged stone or the inner, ornate beauty. There were several chapels along the sides, including one where babies were baptized in twos and threes. There was a long row of confessional boxes. Among the people confessing there was a varied assortment: a British Navy lieutenant, a little Italian boy. Some knelt, others stood. The priests heard confession in various languages.

Outside, stood the Swiss guard of the Pope, dressed in their medieval costumes. Each carried an axe in his hand. Under the colonnades there were peddlers of rosaries and post-card vendors.

St. Peter's had a charm of its own.

I was often taken to the American Officers' Club in the Piazza Barberini by some of the American war correspondents who frequented the place, till they decided to make me a sort of honorary member, or as one of the American Red Cross girls put it, 'to give me the freedom of the Piazza.' The Red Cross arranged all sorts of trips for officers on leave in Rome. The men were conducted on sight-seeing tours, accompanied by an interpreter.

One day I thought I would get a story on the slums of Rome and asked the American Red Cross for the loan of one of their interpreters, to which they kindly agreed. My interpreter was a homely, buxom Italian ex-school-teacher with a little sparkle in her eye and enthusiasm such as only school-

teachers have. Indian Public Relations had laid on transport for me, complete with an Indian driver.

My destination was a Prima Vale, an impoverished suburb of Rome. It was here that Mussolini had built tenements, originally intended to house 2,000 people, but which now housed something like 30,000. There were a few Polish nuns who ran a school and cared for the children of Prima Vale and the interpreter suggested we should take one of these Polish nuns to conduct us through the area. So we did. First the Polish nun would give directions in Italian to the school-teacher, who would translate it into English for me and I would, in turn, render the direction into Hindustani for the Indian driver of our transport.

We arrived at the tenements, which looked so grey and cold. There was not an ounce of warmth in them, due both to lack of fuel and lack, also, of human kindness. Yet it was here that I met one of the most adorable characters of the war. His name was Vincenzo, the fifteen-year old son of an Italian labourer. There was nothing in Italy to compare with him.

Vincenzo's father earned 100 lira (five shillings) a day. He was at work when we called. His mother was in town, where she had gone to fetch *brothe*, gruel soup. His grandmother, his kid sister and his kid brother were at home.

Vincenzo had a clean strong face. His hands seemed always ready to work, his sleeves were rolled up. He had a power of expression unusual in a boy of his age and his mellow voice was like music in those surroundings. The room was bare and showed signs of intense poverty. There were a couple of



dirty blankets under which the old lady slept. On the table was an empty bottle. The old lady was moaning, and Vincenzo explained, with a touch of realism: 'It is age and hunger that makes her moan.' He was above all that, and stood before me in his stocky little frame, fondly putting his protecting hand over his little sister's shoulder.

I asked him what he wanted most.

He replied: 'I want work—only work.' He appealed to the school-teacher and to the nun to find him work. The nun told him there was still time for him to go to work.

Other boys of his age in the tenements went to town to shine shoes for American G.I's. They would pinch articles lying in unoccupied jeeps. Vincenzo could not do that, he said. His mother was a strict, God-fearing woman, and even poverty had not shaken the principles for which she stood.

'My mother says it is better to be poor and have nothing, than to steal,' Vincenzo said. I could see from his face that he did not doubt the wisdom of his mother's words. He was the cleanest child I ever saw, the sort of boy I'd like to have.

Our next call was on another family, which unlike Vincenzo's had accepted defeat and were slowly but surely going under. There was an old woman here who was so emaciated that she brought back to me the days of the Bengal famine. She lay on a small cot, moaning and toothless. She was dying. In the same room there was her daughter, a young, pretty woman, with a distracted look on her face. Her hair was dishevelled. She appeared meek and confused at seeing death creep into the room without so much as a finger being raised to

stave it off. Her two kids wore a horribly anguished look on their faces. The school-teacher was so upset by this sight that she put fifty lira in the hands of the old lady, who was not even aware of what was happening. The Polish nun was quite gentle with them, but to her death had become an everyday sight.

It was a horrible feeling to see humanity so degraded. Yet one could not pause and think out solutions for those who were weak and who would not survive, when a whole war was being fought in which so many strong, clean young men and women were dying.

On our return we dropped the Polish nun, leaving only the school-teacher, my Indian driver and myself in the transport. At a certain moment my Indian jeep driver turned to the Italian school-teacher and addressed her in Italian, asking her where she wished to be dropped. This surprised me quite a bit. When we dropped the school-teacher, I turned to my jeep driver and asked why he had not spared me all the interpreting earlier. He replied in English this time, and said: 'Sahib is officer and it look bad if sepoy speak Italian and Sahib no speak Italian.'

I put that in my pipe and smoked it.

Lionel collected me in the morning and drove me in his staff car to Palatine Hill below which the Forum lay. I had noticed all over Rome that most of the public places had the strange initials, S.P.Q.R., engraved or painted on them. I asked

Lionel what they meant and he explained that the initials stood for 'Senator Populus Que Romanae.'

I thought they stood for 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Romans!'

Below the hill was a cage of the she-wolf on whose milk, according to the legend, the twins—Romulus and Remus—who founded Rome, had been reared. When we reached the top of the hill, Rome lay below us. The Kings of Rome had built palace upon palace, which were now all in ruins. But their glory was still there.

We drove to St. Peter's once again, where Lionel wanted to show me the Sistine Chapel, most of which was the work of Michele Angelo. The ceiling of this chapel was the most exquisite piece of painting I had seen in a long time. Michele Angelo had laboured on it many years. Lying on his back, he painted on that ceiling the story of the Bible from the birth of man to the crucifixion. He had taken the walls and ceilings of that empty chapel as the canvas for his painting.

The other great work of beauty in Rome was the Palazzo Venecia, once the residency of the Ambassador of Venice and in more recent times the headquarters of Mussolini. It was a beautiful 13th century original on which others had built in later centuries. The Palazzo Venecia had great dignity. When we visited it, an art collection of the Renaissance period was being exhibited there: Reinhart, El Greco and others. The Palace had two most interesting large rooms with Gothic interiors. Mussolini used them as his office! Into the floor of one of them, the Duçe had mosaiced

in black and white, a Fascist battle-axe. Somehow it fitted into the general pattern of the Palazzo.

I stood at the window of the big room, which overlooked the Piazza Venecia, from which Mussolini used to speak to the people, and thought of the days when this modern Caesar was at the height of his power. Those days, God willing, shall never return.

Not far from the Palazzo was a small, but very old church which still smelt musty. Outside the chapel there was a little fountain called the *Bocca de Vera*—the Mouth of Truth. It was made of marble and the lips were pronounced. The legend said that men used to put their hands on those lips and swear the truth.

I went to the American Red Cross Club that evening, where one of the girls had asked a few friends for drinks. An Italian I met at this party told me a story of Rachel Mussolini, the Duce's wife. Rachel was a peasant woman. Some say Mussolini lived with her first and married her much later in life. The story was about an official reception at which, for the first time, Rachel Mussolini was allowed by the Duce to be present. Hitherto, Mussolini had always kept her in the background of his public life. The reception was a formal one and Rachel stood at the top of the flight of stairs where the diplomats from all over the world and men of State were presented to her. Each bowed and kissed her hand. Rachel was a little overwhelmed. At the end of the diplomatic queue there arrived on the scene a small, short Oriental, who was the Japanese Ambassador to Rome. Rachel looked at him in a puzzled sort of way and when he extended

his hand, she kissed it in the excitement of the moment. All Rome talked about the incident for days and the Duce was most embarrassed.

In a few days I was back in Florence. I had gone there to get special permission to be allowed to contact the Italian Partisans and to write a story on them. Odd people had come into the Partisan movement. Among them was a former speed-track driver who had driven Alfa Romeos with Nuvolari on some of the greatest speed-tracks of the world. His name was Lieutenant Brivio. Brivio shared digs with a U. S. Major, whose name was Sandro Cagiati. I dined with them one night on their 'K' rations and beans. They arranged to get me the right contacts and to send me, complete with a guide, to some of the forward posts from which the Partisans operated.

While there was still so much fighting going on not many miles from Florence, in Florence itself the Italians were reviving social life. A cocktail bar had been reopened. All Florence flocked to it on sunny mornings. The bar was so full that people went into the street and sipped their drinks standing in the sun. Later that evening I went with Gordon Lampson, who was Killearn's son and General Clark's A.D.C., to a new night-club of which we were made members on the spot. It was called Al Pozzo di Beatrice -- 'The Well of Beatrice.' It had a wishing well on the premises. Florentine society came here for an aperitif. The management had succeeded in dishing out a sweetish cocktail

called 'Negrone'. We dined later at a black-market restaurant, which was out of bounds for officers, but to which, fortunately, war correspondents were allowed. G.H.Q. accepted the theory that a correspondent may have to dine at such a place in search of a story! Our bill came to 2,800 lira for five people, exactly £ 7.

The next day, Brivio took me to dinner at his friend's place. His friend was also a speed-track driver and his name was Pintacuda. Signora Pintacuda was a northern Italian blonde with classic features. She was expecting a baby. Pintacuda described how they had to spend several days in their cellar, because the Germans had used the gardens outside his house as the base for their artillery and later, when the Germans were driven out, the Indian artillery moved in and used the same base. The facade of his house in the Piazza Donnatello was peppered with machine-gun fire. When bullets had come through the front door, it became necessary for them to hide in the cellar.

Pintacuda had seen both the Germans and the Allies in Florence. He thought the Germans were more efficient, if only because they were ruthlessly disciplined. They carried out an order to the letter. The Germans would say to a railway agent, 'Here are eight wagons of food. See that the food gets to the people or we shall kill you.' And the food got to the people because the Italian railway agent was scared of being shot dead if he did not carry out the order. The Allies were more polite and consequently the Italians became lax and the food never reached the people.

He told me another story which revealed the

German mind. An Italian factory had been taken by the Germans. One of the Italian workers said to the new German foreman, 'I suppose you will kill us now.'

'No,' replied the German, 'Why should we kill you? You and I are friends. Of course, if it is an order, that would be different.'

Pintacuda described the Germans to me as he saw them in the streets. They were spick and span and held themselves rigidly upright. Their Prussian spirit was always in evidence, their sense of discipline almost machine-like.

'When I see an American soldier salute an officer,' Pintacuda said, 'he looks as if he is saying "Hi you buddy"', but when a German saluted his officer, his eyes would be glued to the man he was saluting. There was German discipline.'

From Florence I moved up to spend a few days with the 5th Army. It was still bitterly cold as we drove up in the jeep along the road from Florence to Cavigliano. I spent the night in a house in which Kesselring had lived.

What a bitterly cold night that was! The five blankets I collected felt like confetti. The ground outside was frozen but the visibility next morning was good and the sun promised to appear later in the day. In snowboots, leather jackets, coats and mufflers, we were bound frontwards in a jeep. It was only a few miles' drive to the most forward positions. Here the Fifth Army had been dug in for so long that to many Americans the hill features seemed like familiar landmarks of an old home-town.

The first bit of activity since jumping the Gothic Line had met with stiff German resistance,

indicating that Kesselring still meant business on this side of the Po Valley. Here in the Appennines, south of Bologna, the Fifth Army had been patiently waiting for the bitter cold to mellow and the deep snow to thaw. At the observation posts on the surrounding peaks, Kesselring's forces had looked at those of General Truscott exchanging occasional greetings of salves, interspersed with more personal greetings in the shape of patrols.

How difficult was the terrain, could be judged from the road traversed by the jeep. Only a generous sense of humour could laugh at its close resemblance to the switchback railway at a village fair. In parts the road steeped 45 degrees and where the snow had thawed, soft gluey brown mud had replaced it like chocolate sauce, over which it was difficult to hold the jeep. The cardiogram of the road would closely resemble an erratic heartbeat and in many places up the steep precipice it was wiser to walk alongside the jeep. American Buck Privates with their usual sense of humour called the climb 'East Street'.

It was quiet that day except for Fifth Army guns which kept reminding Kesselring that they had not forgotten him in spite of the snow and the slush. The valley echoed with thuds interspersed with the more staccato notes of mortars. At a standstill, the jeep would shake even though gun positions were many yards away from us. Beyond the safety line where glass sunshields had to be down, we knew we were within sight of the enemy's observation posts. The Germans were looking at us from hilltops on the other side of the valley. A standstill truck had been fired on two days before, leaving no trace



of the truck. But now they did not seem interested in odd objects on the road.

In the midst of all this, close to the battleground, an Italian child was playing with the rubble. He had begun to regard war as a normal phenomenon of life. Seeing the sun for the first time in many days, Italian peasant women were washing clothes at a nearby brook. They had learnt to distinguish between enemy and Allied gunfire and knew when it was safe to come out of the caves in which they lived. Their farm houses were now billets of war.

In between the salvoes an American gunner had taken time off for a shave in the shelter of a roofless house where the company barber had installed his shop. Outside the Divisional Commander's trailer, a proud rooster and six hens lurked. They had followed the commander all the way from Anzio and provided him with fresh eggs for breakfast.

Kesselring looked on.

The next day began with a bright, clear morning, which was a welcome change. On the west flank of the Fifth Army Front, the 92nd Negro Division had been in action for two or three days.

High-ranking American Generals had specially come to see the Negroes in action—the first action of its kind after several weeks on the Fifth Army Front. The area of operation was the west coast and the mountainous terrain, north of Lucca.

Kesselring had not given way and he dispelled

all wishful thinking that he would pull out to take a more compact position, using the Alps as a natural fortress. We drove up to forward positions about a mile from the enemy observation posts. The Germans had the advantage of being on higher ground, shelling heavily into the valley where we were. During a lull, Negro batteries also replied but the Germans were unyielding. At the end of five days of Negro offensive, their communique frankly reported that their own casualties and tank losses were relatively high while no net gains in terrain were made. Then Mark Clark put in the Eighth Indian Division. But for the Indians, according to American General Mark Clark, the situation might have been serious. The Germans knew that the presence of Indian troops meant business.

From a jeep parked near the Negro battery, I had watched the burly Negroes pounding away at enemy positions. It was like a Broadway show. In rapid succession Negro guns boomed, our jeep rocking nearby in a sort of wartime swing. Further up the road the townsfolk gathered in small groups feeling insecure in their houses and afraid that the Germans would return fire. From across the lines came the first batch of prisoners—about twenty, chiefly Italian. Only one was a German, whose ribbon showed he had fought in Russia. He also had a German decoration. Shoddy, ill-clad and tired, they walked into a nearby P.O.W. cage. On their way into town, the prisoners were too tired to hold their hands up and so they walked with hands resting on their heads. Only one Italian Lieutenant felt inclined to be talkative. He said he had been captured by Germans in Greece and later

taken into Germany. He seemed apologetic about himself and his Italian comrades for fighting for the Germans, but indicated that the only alternative was death at German hands!

Prisoners were lined up with their faces turned toward the wall. Then they were searched by the Negroes and stripped of papers and belongings. Unable to stand up straight because of fatigue, many almost fell asleep standing against the wall. But the one and only German remained unmoved. He wore a short beard and had an intelligent face, which made him impressive. In reply to an officer, he said he had heard that the Russians were 200 kilometres from Berlin. He shrugged his shoulders when told of the new Russian advances. In reply to a question whether he would like to return to the lines to continue fighting, he said he would 'behave' if treatment was kind, otherwise he preferred to be shot through the heart. Drama!

The Negro G.I's who were stripping the Italians of everything, were very mean. They pinched little things like matches and penknives, as 'souvenirs of de great big war.'

The Allied line at that time, stood a little below Massa on the west and a little above Ravenna on the east. On the map it was a wavy line tapering upwards just below Bologna. For a considerable time this line had remained unchanged and Kesselring had shown his teeth each time the Allies tried to move.

The next day, on my way back to Florence, I went to see some of the work done by the Psychological Warfare Branch of the Army. A member of the United States Army, living in the attic of a farm-

house in Northern Italy was conducting part of this psychological war against the Germans. He was Klaus Mann, son of that distinguished man of letters, Thomas Mann. A dark flight of steps led to his one-roomed attic. An Italian peasant family were still living on the farm. The atmosphere of this farmhouse was earthy, smelling of potatoes and of clothes which were hanging to dry, and of soup in the making. Yet it was here that a war was being waged for men's minds. On the walls of the room hung pictures of Klaus's father and other family portraits, pictures of Hollywood starlets, cut from magazines, reproductions of surrealist art and samples of leaflets used in psychological war. The tone of German leaflets indicated the trend of German psychology. The German leaflets were grim, almost ghastly. They showed graves, skulls and ghosts. Other German leaflets were lewd and pornographic with pictures of naked women with which the Germans hoped to capture the mind of the Allied soldier.

The Germans had played on the possibility of a break in the Allied lines. In one of the leaflets, Churchill and Roosevelt were portrayed as little boys in sailor suits, while Stalin was the big fellow with the big stick driving them from behind. Another leaflet was intended to make the G. I. unhappy that he was fighting in a war so far from home and that he was away from all the nice things of life. 'The happy days are gone', the leaflet seemed to say, portraying a seductive woman in evening dress in the middle of an army of marching men, who were mud-covered and weary. Below, in a corner of the leaflet, there was a

grave with a cross over it. On the cross was a U. S. helmet.

Allied leaflets tried to show the German soldier how soon he could get home, if he laid down arms. The one I saw showed a German Prisoner of War returning to his homeland and into the arms of his homely woman. In the background of the picture there was a picture of a little home. On the back of the leaflet there were printed death notices from German newspapers.

Another Allied leaflet showed a woman and child at Christmas, thus repaying the Germans for trying to make Allied soldiers homesick.

Asked about German morale as judged from the prisoners of war with whom he came in close contact, Klaus Mann said to me: 'Of course, their morale is going down, but that is natural. It has been a gradual decline accentuated by the letters they have received from home. But what is surprising is that some still think they have a winning chance.'

The mentality of the German soldier was that he would continue fighting as long as he was ordered to do so. 'They cling to the last hope,' Mann said, that if Germany holds out long enough, there may be conflict among the Allies. There is also the fear of what will happen afterwards to Germany. They fear Russia very much. A large percentage of Germans are just war-weary. They are apathetic. Others are actively anti-Nazi and the rest are still fanatically Fascist. They are, broadly speaking, incapable of taking any revolutionary initiative. But if the Army leaders surrender they would be relieved.'

I asked Mann whether they gave any reasons for their many defeats. 'Exclusively to Allied military and material superiority,' Mann said. 'Morally, mentally and strategically they believe they were always superior.'

Mann told me that he had received a letter from a war correspondent who had just visited Aachen. The letter spoke of the absence of bad conscience in the German people. This was partly because the German people did not know what had happened under the Nazis and partly also because they did not want to know. They were unaware of the Nazi concentration camps. They are just terribly sorry for themselves and felt sorry for themselves because Germany was poor.

I felt then that the problem facing the Allies was not only the defeat of Germany. After the Allies had conquered German territory, they would have to conquer the German mind.

From Florence I went via Lucca to Ponte A Moriano. It was in a villa here that a section of the O.S.S., who handled the Italian partisans, had made their H.Q. This villa was near Villa Ciano, which belonged to Count Ciano's father.

The U. S. officers, who handled this outfit, were Italian-born Americans. Major Rosetti was in charge and Captain Gastaldo was second in command. The latter was once a barman in one of New York's leading night clubs before the war. He was doing a man's job now.

The boys gave me a great lunch of spaghetti

with meat sauce, such as I had not tasted for a long time. We then drove across to the Bagni di Lucca, where we met another officer, called Captain Sabatino. He reminded me of the tough guy in the movies, whose name might have been 'Shadow'.

Through 'Shadow' I contacted and stayed with the Partisans of Northern Italy. There was something fascinating about these men—and even women—who were fighting as guerrillas to help in the liberation of their country. More than anything else I have seen on this front, these shoddy, ill-clad, ill-equipped bands of men and women, who were daily risking their lives, resembled crusaders in the real sense of the word. Unlike the great Allied armies, these Partisans fought the Germans with next to nothing. They operated not only on our side of the front, but also often behind enemy lines, harassing his lines of communication, blowing up his dumps and shooting him up whenever possible.

The odds against the Partisans were very heavy and when captured there was instant death for them. Yet, fired by unbelievable patriotism and hatred of Fascism, which had dominated their lives, they fought without flinching. Unlike the Partisans of Marshal Tito, the Italians were not of one political conviction. Unlike the Chinese Eighteenth Route Army, they were not Communists. They were a mixed lot; Communists, Catholics and even Royalists. They came from various walks of life—from mills, farm and factories, from schools and colleges, from the peasant and working classes, from the middle, intellectual classes, from small towns, villages and big cities. They could not often express what their goal was, but in general they were idealists,

fighting for that something beautiful which calls itself 'Freedom'. Only the enemy was common.

They were not all men. Women fought with them also. Recovering in a small farmhouse converted into a Partisan Hospital, was a little Italian peasant girl of 18. She was the daughter of small-town worker. Her Father was killed by the Fascists four years ago. She had seen them take him away. She had seen his body riddled with bullets. She never forgot the sight and never forgave the Fascists.

The words 'Partisan Hospital' were big words for two tiny rooms with a little more than first aid equipment. The young girl of 18 lay under a tattered, dark grey blanket on a bed, which was little better than the Indian charpoi. Ill though she was, there was colour on her cheeks which had come not from cosmetics of beauty parlours, but from the mountain air which sustained her.

I asked where she lived and she said : 'Where I lived has all been bombed. I have only the mountains to which I can go.'

She might have been Maria from Hemmingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Elsewhere I met a young man of 20 who had been shot through his right arm, deadening his fingers. The bullet wound had just healed and he was impatient to return to his Partisan group of which he was the leader. I asked him what he was fighting for. He said : 'Why should the British, Americans and Indians liberate my country ? Italy must be liberated by Italians.' He leant on a wall eating his evening meal which consisted of a cupful of soup with *pasta* and green peas, half a loaf of bread and a



piece of cheese. This meal came to him through the courtesy of the Allied Powers !

But the most fascinating of all the Partisans was Pippo whose name was like music to Italian ears. The Germans valued Pippo highly. On his head—dead or alive—Germans had placed a reward of a thousand pounds sterling. Pippo was no hooligan bandit. He was a cultured man of letters, formerly a student of philosophy. He looked like one of the Cecils. With his soft, shining eyes, Pippo was an inspiration to the Partisans he led. Starting with a following of one on the day Fascism was thrown overboard, Pippo had marshalled and organised his large band.

To the Germans the name of Pippo was nerve-shattering. No German position was safe when Pippo and his men were around. Asked how many Germans he had accounted for, Pippo smiled but would not answer. At dinner, on the night he came back from behind the German lines, which for him was somewhat routine, Pippo told me the story of the growth of Fascism in Italy. A professor of contemporary history could not have done better. Pippo's mind was logical, his expression clear.

I asked what he intended to do when Italy was completely liberated. He seemed unwilling to commit himself. He said : 'Much depends on how things will shape after the war.' Then he smiled and said : 'I shall probably grow potatoes and read more philosophy.'

I asked him what he understood by the liberation of Italy. He looked across the table and cast a glance at the young American officer, then shrugged his shoulders. 'Now I'll go and see my wife,' he said, changing the subject,

Partisans operated in various areas between Massa and Bologna. Working in small bands, they were agile and elusive. They knew every inch of the terrain and were difficult to get at. But each time they went across the lines there was never any certainty that they would return.

I saw them in various areas not far from the front line. I ate with them, stayed with them and talked long hours with them. Some were keen on hearing about India, not geographically, but in terms of the march of its people. They knew about Mahatma Gandhi and spoke respectfully of him. They had not heard of Mr. Jinnah. To them Mahatma Gandhi stood for Indian freedom. The struggle of freedom everywhere interested them.

I could not help feeling that while Partisan activity was a great asset to the Allies at that time, one day these same Partisans would become a political problem. They were a part of the Left-Wing movement which is sweeping over all the world.

Before I left to return to Headquarters I was asked, along with an American Major, to review a group of 200 Partisans. A wavy khaki line trickled down the mountainside. Faint strains of singing could be heard, till gradually they came to an improvised saluting base where we stood. The American Major took the salute. Their full-throated voices were singing their marching song, 'Rebelli'. It was so like 'La Marseillaise.'

Some day you will hear again of these men and their song.

Before leaving the O.S.S. Forward Camp, Gastaldo invited Rosetti and me for a drink at the Officers' Club at Lucca. It was formerly an

Italian nobleman's house, complete with a musty smell. The American boys had converted it into a sort of night club with a long bar, a radiogram and decorated it with a few local 'flewies'. One of them was introduced to me as the Comtessa So-and-So. They were all Comtessas as far as I could see. We drove back in the jeep late at night under a clear sky, as Gastaldo talked high finance to me. He had great ideas of making money after the war. All this money was to be made out of sulphur. The drinks were talking.

The next day I left after lunch for Pisa and drove to the airport to see the fleet of Thunderbolts which were based there. My eyes caught site of a V.I.P.'s plane, which flashed a pennant of five stars. The plane was guarded by a Negro sentry. There were only two five-star Generals active in this war and it was reasonable to deduce that this plane was that of General Marshall on his way back from Yalta. I could not get a plane to Rome that afternoon so I waited till next morning and drove all the way down by jeep and filed my story on General Marshall which was passed by the British censor. It turned out that I was ahead of the British and American press by 24 hours on this story and there was a hell of a flap in Public Relations over it. The British censor, who had passed my story, was pretty glad that a British correspondent, even though it was an Indian really, had scooped the Americans on their own story. When my cuttings came back from India, I found that the *Bombay Chronicle*, to whom the

story was filed, had used the story in a small paragraph on page 5.

Back in Rome I lunched with Brigadier Lush and his aide, Pat Russell. She was nice, as aides go. As we were walking from A.F.H.Q. to the Brigadier's house, a plane flew over us and Lush remarked: 'That's probably Winny on his way back.' Churchill was returning from Greece.

In a few days I was on my way down to Casserta for an interview with Field Marshal Alexander. Godfrey Talbot, head of the B. B. C. in the Mediterranean Theatre, was with me. Talbot was also having an interview with the Field Marshal. So we drove together. At first Talbot appeared to be frigid, but as we drove along Highway 7, he gradually mellowed, until we became quite friendly on the trip. We drove over the long strip of the Pontian Marshes, which the Germans had flooded to cover their retreat. We dined that night in the U.S. Officers' Mess in the Palace at Casserta and retired early.

Talbot described to me the difference between Alexander and Montgomery. He said Alexander was like a highly-strung race-horse, shy in the paddock on the eve of a race. Montgomery was 'perhaps the best field commander of this war.' The two types were completely different. Alexander genuinely disliked publicity and was uncomfortable with it. Montgomery liked it, though he did not look for it.

My exclusive interview with Alexander was difficult to get for there was a directive of the War Office which said that no Supreme Commander should give an exclusive interview to any individual

War Correspondent. I had represented that my case was different and that there were several Indian Divisions fighting under him and that it was the first time an Indian War Correspondent had made the request. Moreover, I carried a nice letter of introduction from General Paget of the Middle East Command to the Field Marshal. All this high-level introduction produced results, for I found myself being received by the Field Marshal in his office at the Casserta Palace the next morning.

Alexander had fought in the last war as an Irish Guardsman. He was the product of Harrow and Sandhurst, a typical English aristocrat. He had an unassailable dignity, tempered only by his sense of wry humour, a subtle charm, grace and gentility.

Although he held the high position of Supreme Commander of the Mediterranean, the Field Marshal retained a certain simplicity which was uncanny. It is said that in the days of Cassino, he took almost a boyish delight in watching the eruptions of Vesuvius. With the same boyish delight he told me he knew Hindustani. Then, with almost a blush, he added: 'I passed my high standard examination in it.'

In India he was a Colonel in the 32nd Punjab Regiment. He commanded the Nowshera Brigade from 1934 to 1937. Of Indian soldiers, he said: 'Of all the people fighting, these men take immense pride in the profession of the Army. They come from warrior families and fight because they look upon the soldier's art as the most honourable form of life.'

Alexander explained how soldiers of various countries had individual characteristics. The Indian

soldier liked to have time to prepare for a big scale attack and did not like being hustled into it.

He did not share my wishful thinking about the possibility of Kesselring withdrawing from Italy. He took the view that the Nazis would fight to the bitter end. The fall of Berlin would be a tremendous moral blow and if Berlin were to be cut off, German organized resistance would begin to crumble. He agreed that there may not be a formal surrender, but eventually the Nazis would lose control and there would be increased desertions from the German Army, till organized resistance would finally break down.

Before I left I said to him: 'I would like to ask you one question, sir, which is probably rather personal. You were the last man from Dunkirk. They say you went all round in a launch to make sure all your men had got away. What were your personal feelings at that moment?'

Shyly, he replied: 'I believed that we, as a people, would not be conquered. Britain has not been conquered since the day of William the Conqueror. But I could not see how the war would ever be won. Yet you see it has happened.'

We came back to Rome via Cassino and I was able to have another look at it, this time in clearer light. Here I saw the grave of my friend, Roderick Macdonald, an Australian War Correspondent, whom I first met in Chungking. The grave of another correspondent lay beside his and Talbot told me how they have been blown up by a mine. Nothing had ever been seen of them.

Talbot took me up the hill where he explained to me how the battle for Cassino was fought,

how the Indians of the 4th Indian Division crawled up like ants and died like ants also. He had seen much fighting in this war, but he had seen nothing to compare with the suicidal attack of the 14th Indian Division in which the Gurkhas played a spectacular part. It was nice to hear an Englishman pay such a compliment to my countrymen in the field.

Back in Rome, I attended the Press Conference given by Harold Macmillan, who was head of the Allied Commission. The conference took the form of a cocktail party to the press, followed by a statement on the new Allied policy towards Italy. Macmillan was a shrewd, blue-blooded Tory with all the failings of men of his class. In politics he was unreliable. He was a partner in the firm of Macmillan, the publishers. The speech he made that evening would have been more suited to the pre-war Oxford Union than to the Italian people, who were facing starvation at that time. Macmillan's declaration was horribly pompous, his gestures pseudo-Churchillian. Often they did not synchronize with his words. He wore a typical English moustache, horn-rimmed glasses and a dark blue suit. Seated next to him was his second in command, Admiral Stone of the U. S. Navy, looking somewhat like Popeye the Sailor Man.

The press did not like Macmillan and there was no applause for him when he finished. He was then asked questions. The first question came from Packard of the U. P. who wanted Macmillan to define clearly what this new status was, towards which Italy was supposed to be progressing. There was a lot of ambiguity about this status. Italy was obviously being treated neither as a belligerent nor

as an ally. Packard, therefore, asked Macmillan to clarify the Allied position towards Italy.

Macmillan fumbled, then looked at Stone, who did not volunteer any help. Macmillan realized there was a catch in the question, so he said that he really did not know how to define it and that perhaps the press could suggest something. A female War Correspondent volunteered some definition, which I thought was pretty lousy, even from a female of our species. I felt the urge to get something off my chest and said: 'May I suggest "a free dependency"?' The boys liked the thrust, but it did not go down very well with Macmillan. Thereafter he became aggressive.

It happened that a few days before this conference, Herbert Mathews of the New York Times had filed a story in which he said that President Roosevelt's order that the Italians should get 300 grams of bread instead of 200 grams was not being carried out by the Allied Commission. Macmillan referred to this report in a garbled sort of way and spoke of 'political muckrakers', but later, in a revised text, he changed it to 'mischief-makers', which Herbert Mathews said was even worse.

Macmillan's press conference was the worst I have ever attended and never, during any stage of the war, have I seen correspondents and the press so unfriendly to any of the Allied personnel as on that occasion. The reason was that these war correspondents had seen the poverty in Italy and they found it difficult to stomach the pompous superciliousness of this blue-blooded Tory, who really did not care a damn. In his speech, Macmillan had spoken of



the Allied Armies of 'conquerors'. I put the question to him: 'You used the word "conquerors" when referring to the Allied Armies. General Mark Clark has specifically said in his pamphlet, *The Road to Rome*, that Allied soldiers did not come as conquerors but as "liberators". Which of the two interpretations is correct?'

Macmillan fumbled again and ifted and butted. In the draft, which was released, the word 'conquerors' was substituted by 'victors'! It was typical of Macmillan's attitude.

Among the more interesting Italians I met in Rome, was an Italian journalist. This Italian had his fill of Allied 'intelligence' in more senses than one. Unfortunately, much of what he told me, he expressedly stated should not be used for publication, so—with much reluctance—I yield to his wishes. I also refrain from divulging his name.

From him I heard a cute little story of an incident which occurred at Addis Ababa, when Graziani and other important Italian military chiefs were driving in procession into the capital city of Ethiopia. It was soon after the conquest of Addis Ababa, and the journalist was riding in a car just behind that of Graziani. The big moment came when the Italian procession came past the British Embassy at Addis Ababa, outside which an Indian soldier was mounted as sentry. The Indian was a bearded Sikh and had apparently been given instructions that the British Government had not recognized the conquest of Ethiopia. 'We were all looking

forward to the sentry standing at attention and saluting us. After all, there were a couple of Italian marshals in our procession. But your Indian did not move from his at-ease position. As far as he was concerned we did not even exist. This was the biggest raspberry—the first of its kind—we Italians got in Addis Ababa.'

Another colourful Italian I met in Rome was Avanzo. Avanzo was the odd-Jobs man in the American Officers' Club. He was a tough customer, though he looked a polished, sophisticated man-about-town. He had fought outside Stalingrad; he had also fought in Addis Ababa, where later he purchased a store believing in the expansion of the new Italian Empire. Avanzo had a great sense of humour, often at his own expense. He had a happy way of coining a phrase in order to express himself in English. Of someone who rolled up at the American Red Cross Club, Avanzo said: 'My Gott, isn't he noisily dressed!'

Avanzo described himself as a 'turn-coat', because he was now reduced to wearing his old suits turned inside out. 'The only difference is,' he said, 'my breast pocket comes in the wrong place.'

My seven or eight weeks in Italy were soon over. Before I left Italy, I took stock of the war as it was progressing. The stronghold around Germany was tightening slowly but surely. On the Eastern Front, Marshal Zhukov and Marshal Koniev had made a dramatic dash to Berlin and Breslau. In the west, General Eisenhower was marking time

for the final push. Only Kesselring remained in the south, stoutly dug in with the Po as his line of defence.

Meanwhile, what was happening inside Germany? This was the question most of the observers were asking. A letter written by an intelligent German woman, with obvious sympathies for Nazi Germany, to her husband who was captured on the Italian front, told of the conditions in Germany as in September, 1944. It was written from Bonn, near Cologne. The names of the parties have been changed by me for obvious reasons. The wife wrote:

*Dearest Fritz,*

*This is going to be anything but a cheerful letter. Anyway it is the last. What is going to happen is in the lap of the gods. The front has come so terribly near. I would not dream of writing to you like this just for fun. I only need to look at my luggage—all packed—and the word "war" comes like a blow to drive away any kind of excitement and sentimentality. We have come to a point, alas, when we must leave Bonn—that little paradise among so many shattered towns. Where are we going? Nobody knows. This is just a beginning of the great migration - people move along on the highroad like tramps loaded with their pitiful little bundles. How many tears must be shed at the house and home? Is no mercy to be shown to us human-beings?*

*The last fortnight has been a nerve-shattering trial for us and, however much we harden our wills we cannot stave off anything. All I know is that the Fuhrer needs men—men like you, Fritz—men who are ready to live and also die for their ideas. What is going on here is so contemptible and cowardly that I am seething with rage. You can't imagine how women are full of fear for their menfolk*

*in the party—not to speak of the men themselves. Party members go off and destroy their uniforms, badges and all documents. The fact that pictures of the Fuhrer are first things to be destroyed is just one additional sad fact. Things have come to such a pass that one cannot think ill of soldiers on the front who have been in war for five years if they wish for a speedy end to it. I wish that merciful fate would put an end to this life and there would never be any fighting. And what for? Our future is so uncertain. Nothing anywhere is worth striving for.*

This was an exceptional letter. It illustrated the Nazi mind on the eve of defeat. Unlike the war of 1914-18, this war was taken into Germany.

In a most brilliant review of air activities during 1944, General Eaker had told us only a few days before about the devastating effect of strategic bombing over Germany. General Eaker said: 'I am certain that there is no informed quarter among the Allied war leadership where it is not recognised today that the Casablanca decision to launch full-scale daylight bombing was sound.' Unlike Germany's indiscriminate bombing of open cities, as for example of Rotterdam and London, strategic bombing by the Allies had caused the destruction of Germany's war industry to the point where it could not sustain a winning German war effort.

The German Luftwaffe had been reduced to impotence. The American Air Forces based in England later in Italy accomplished this so successfully that by the spring of 1944 the Luftwaffe was scarcely effective. The Luftwaffe was so enfeebled that it could not prevent Allied landings in Africa and Italy and could no longer support German ground forces in these campaigns. It was

not in the air alone that Allied planes destroyed the German Luftwaffe. This would not have been so easy. Allied precision bombing was concentrated on the German aircraft industry which once manufactured about 1,000 planes per month.

In the spring of 1944, this figure was brought down to 300. But even these planes were not fully at Germany's disposal, for after hitting directly at aircraft factories the Allies concentrated on destroying the essentials of aircraft factories wherewith the planes would fly. Ball bearings and oil, therefore, became priority targets. Without ball bearings the Germans could build little in shape of machinery, and without oil pilots could not be trained to fly.

As General Eaker said: 'We not only out-fought the enemy but we out-thought him also.'

Day by day the power of Allied bombing increased. In a press despatch from Germany by Paul Werner which was monitored and obtained from authoritative sources, he spoke of the defence of Berlin being raised to the rank of a frontline town. Werner said: 'It looks as if amidst the ruins of Berlin, men might yet fulfil a purpose. This purpose is the defence of the capital.' Heaps of rubble and masonry were, according to Paul Werner, used for erecting barricades for the defence of Berlin. Paul Werner said: 'There are no limits to imagination. Some barricades consist of rows of steel safes now filled with broken masonry. Tram cars filled with rubble stand in double rows behind each other.' That was Werner's picture of the defence of Berlin. When read, along with the letter of Fritz's wife, it illustrates the tragic story of the German people. Once these same people

shouted: 'Today Germany is ours, tomorrow all the world.' But as I was leaving Italy, I felt sure that the German dream of world domination was shattered.

On the first Sunday, I walked across to the Park in the afternoon to hear the familiar tub thumpers. I wondered whether they would still be there and what they had to say for themselves. It was a mild summer's day and crowds were ambling as in the days of yore. At the corner of Marble Arch, the crowd thickened around the speakers. One young and earnest speaker was denouncing the Tory Government's Foreign Policy. He sneered at Mr. Churchill's sneaking regard for monarchies and spoke of the days when King Peter of Yugoslavia was being allowed to speak over the B.B.C. in London while Marshal Tito was fighting for his people in the hills of Yugoslavia. Apparently King Peter had said over the B.B.C. 'My heart bleeds for my people.'

The Hyde Park speaker commented: 'What's the use of its bleeding in a B.B.C. Studio? Give him a machine-gun and sickle and send him back to Yugoslavia to fight, and his heart can bloody well bleed as it likes.'

That, too, was England for me.

What stood out from all this was the rise of the common people of Britain. They had become more articulate in voicing their likes and dislikes and their government's policy. The feeling in Britain was that if the common people were good enough to provide the cannon fodder and the industrial manpower for the war, the right to govern the country could no longer remain the exclusive privilege of a class.

At Yalta, it was obviously in deference to British public opinion that Churchill climbed down and accepted a solution to the Polish question,

different from that which he had intended. The days were gone when the common people used to stomach the platitudes of whatever British government was in power. Politics in England were no longer a specialized subject. The average man-in-the-street now felt that he was competent to understand what his government was doing and to express himself either in favour of it or against it. It was democracy at work.

In the seven years in which I had been away, English public opinion had awakened considerably. It was more enlightened in foreign affairs than during the days when I was a student in England. The average man took an intelligent interest in India, for instance, whereas, in the past, India had been only of academic interest to a few specialists. The story is told of how, when the Labour Government swept the polls at the General Election, an Indian was visiting the House of Commons and appeared to be worried about the future of his country. A newly-elected Labour M.P. tapped him on the back and said: 'Why are you looking so gloomy? There are more members of the India League in the House today, than of the Conservative Party.'

That was true, even before the elections.

My London diary reads an odd mixture of personal, political and journalistic details: Interview with Amery; lunch with Ruth; broadcast on the B.B.C.'s North American Service; Jeh Tata at the *Ecu de France*; The Orchid Room; dog racing; Munster at the Home Office; The House of Commons with Grant-Ferris; drinks with Michael Foot; Victor Gollancz; Romilly Cavan, who



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had now written a play; The Ministry of Information.

Most of this is not relevant to this book.

By then the Western Front was beginning to liven up. I realized that if I did not go right away, I might be too late for the curtain fall. So I packed my things one morning and by lunch I was at the Scribe Hotel in Paris, the H.Q. of the War Correspondents at SHAEF.

## SHAEF

Date-lined March 24th, 1945, my first message from SHAEF Rear gave a brief idea of the war position on that day. I said :

*' All hell has broken loose east of the Rhine. The Ruhr has been in flames and north of it the British Second and the American Ninth Armies have made several crossings on a wide front, sweeping everything before them. Further east, airborne troops have been landed successfully and are piercing through German resistance like a sharp knife.*

*' The end of the war is well in sight and it is doubtful if Germany can hold out another month now. For three weeks, the Ruhr has been plastered by some of the heaviest Allied bombing. Never before has air power been used with such a paralysing effect. The concentration of high explosives on 600 square miles, constituting the Ruhr in a rectangle made by Duisburg, Dusseldorf, Soest and Ahlen, has reduced Germany's most vital industrial area virtually to pulp.*

*' But the spearhead of Allied recent attack is further north, avoiding the congested area of the Ruhr. Too much time would have been wasted had the Ruhr itself been the main battleground. It would have meant street-fighting and slow progress. But General Montgomery's decision to land north of it makes the drive into northern Germany easier to accomplish. The Ruhr can effectively be isolated and neutralized without actually fighting through it. Prior to the Rhine crossings, the north Ruhr area bound by Ahaus,*

*Munster, Dulmen, Haltern and Wesel was plastered heavily by Allied bombers.*

*'Complete devastation was reported with whole towns left burning. Reports reaching here indicated little sign of movement in that area. One bomber pilot said he saw "not a puff of smoke from a single railway engine and no sign of enemy aircraft." All is quiet on the Western Front.*

*'SHAEF in a confident, though cautious comment, says: "All is going well and entirely according to plan. Enemy forward positions are not too strongly held and more powerful forces are yet to be encountered. The present crossings of General Montgomery are north and south of Wesel above the river Lippe, which hits the Rhine at right angles."*

*'At least four crossings have been reported. These can be called bridgeheads only when sufficiently strengthened. They began at nine o'clock last night, with the Argylls and the Sutherland Highlanders stepping across into the Rees area, followed by the Americans of the Ninth Army, who crossed at two o'clock the same night. Where the first Allied airborne army has landed is not yet disclosed but first supplies have already reached them by air, which would indicate the strength in which they have landed and established themselves.*

*'Nothing can save Germany now, nor is it possible for the Germans to stem the Allied offensive. The Rhine, which was a strong bastion of German defence, has been lost by the Germans. In the North Ruhr, the river Ems appears to be the only defensive line on the way to Bremen. Nazi stubbornness which persists in carrying on the fight to the bitter end, is reducing Germany to a shamble.*

*'In the last five days' operations, the American Ninth Air Force flew 12,000 sorties to blast enemy communication*

*centres, railroad yards, fortified towns, troops and armour in the Ruhr and Rhineland alone. This constitutes a most intensive series of attacks since it began operations from Britain in the Autumn of 1943. Between bombers and fighter-bombers, 7,628 tons of bombs were dropped in this area. Against such overwhelming air superiority, and such crushing bombardment from the air, even Kesselring can do little. His stonewalling tactics though successful to an extent in northern Italy, can be of little avail here.*

*'It is just hell let loose and only God can save the Germans from extinction now, and even God does not appear to be on their side.'*

I knew within a few days of my arrival at SHAEF that the Germans would never see the Rhine again. Only those who had perished on its banks and lay buried there would remain close to it. All others would see it fade in the distance as hordes of Allied troops would sweep over it like an avalanche.

By now three whole Allied armies had crossed the river at Xanten, Remagen and the area around Oppenheim. The Ruhr was doomed. Democracy was about to toll the knell of Nazi Germany. The end was only a question of time.

By now Wesel had been cleared by British Commandos and the town of Rees was also cleared. The prisoners taken by the Second British Army and the Airborne Army totalled 6,500 in a single day. Along with the American 9th Army, which was fighting beside it, the Allies were strengthening their bridgeheads across the Rhone. Further south on the Rhine, on the front tackled by the American First Army, there was evidence of swift German resistance on the Bonn-Coblenz sector. It was, however,

General Patton's Third Army which stole the thunder, for in 24 hours Patton took a total of 19,000 prisoners, which constituted a record. Patton's ten days score of German prisoners was 72,000. At the rate at which Germans were being taken prisoners, I wondered if there would be any left to surrender.

The sorties flown by Allied aircraft were approaching 6,000 a day. Details available at the briefing showed that German tanks, transport locomotives, gun positions, barges, motor vehicles and railway cars were being destroyed by many hundreds every day. Whole buildings were being reduced to rubble and there were fewer and fewer left standing on the face of Germany. Never before had a single people taken so merciless a punishment. German earth had been scorched and the candle of German life was slowly but steadily being extinguished. It looked as if nothing would remain alive in Germany if this massacre went on. The pride of the Germans had stooped, their morale was crushed, the people were dazed. Nazi civilization was being reduced to cinders. There only remained one bitterness for the Germans to taste. It was the bitterness that came with defeat.

We learnt at SHAEF that General Eisenhower had been over the Rhine to see his Ruhr-bound troops with Generals Bradley and Hodges. Soon the American Seventh had also got across. There was nothing even in the shape of a mild protest from the Luftwaffe. Often our pilots reported that German planes remained on the ground and would not come up for a fight.

A day or two later there was great excitement

at the hotel, for word had come to us at lunch time that Eisenhower was coming to see us that afternoon. Everyone was in his place some time before the usual conference began and the large briefing room of the Scribe was packed. The armed guard outside this room stood at more rigid attention than usual. Passes were doubly checked that day, for inside that room, in which only war correspondents and high officers of Public Relations were allowed, were some of the most important secrets of the war; the position of every army, corps, regiment and battalion.

Eisenhower had come straight to us from his trip across the Rhine. It was a big moment for him, for his armies were marching to final victory. Aware of his achievement, confident of eventual victory, yet dignified and cautious in his utterance that day, he gave the smoothest and most brilliant press conference it has been my privilege to attend.

The Supreme Commander said: 'I would not have you think I have written off this war. No one knows what the German can do within his own country. He is trying to do everything he can. I believe so far as he is able, the German will stand and fight wherever we find him.'

He spoke for over three-quarters of an hour without a note and without faltering or hesitating for a moment. His speech had the brilliance of a polished diplomat and the vigour of a front-line soldier. He explained to us how one phase of the campaign has been ended and how the Allies were now entering upon another phase. The Rhine, which was the symbol of German resistance, was also a tremendous military and geographic feature. He



said: 'Elimination of German troops west of the Rhine was one of the greatest victories of this or any other war. I would say that the Germans as a military force on the Western Front are a whipped army.'

Cautiously he added: 'That does not mean that a front cannot be formed somewhere else where our maintenance is stretched to the limit, and their defensive means can better be brought to bear.'

There was, however, no doubt in his mind about the eventual result. 'One day I shall be able to tell you that organized resistance in Germany is broken.'

Eisenhower took the view that the Germans would not surrender unconditionally. His hands clasped throughout as though they were helping him to concentrate and to speak with supreme precision. He added: 'That is my honest opinion. There will be no negotiated unconditional surrender. There will be an imposed unconditional surrender.' Eisenhower foresaw the first thing would be to enforce order and he said: 'We are going to have to do this by force of arms.' According to him this would be done locality by locality into which Allied armies would go and establish order till the time would come for Allied Governments to decide what was to be done with Germany.

I asked him whether he took a serious view of the attack on American soldiers by German civilians. Eisenhower replied: 'I have told my Army Commanders that any civilian resistance should be dealt with sternly on the spot. I will not tolerate civilians out of uniform firing on my troops.' The fact remained that these German civilians, who

answered Hitler's call for a last pitched battle to save the Fatherland, caused no little bother to the Allied Armies in the final stages of the conquest of Germany.

Eisenhower then reviewed the plan of the campaign from the time it was first envisaged. He explained how there were two possibilities facing the Allied High Command. One was to allow the German to hold the Siegfried Line except at chosen points of penetration, to ignore him and drive into Germany with a view to defeat him. The alternative was to join up the armies from the north and the south, defeat Germany west of the Rhine and to proceed to defeat the German on the Western Front. There was apparently difference of opinion as to which of these plans was to be adopted, but Eisenhower had taken the view that the latter was the correct plan. He felt that if the Rhine was penetrated only at one spot, the Germans would have advance notice of the thrust. By the plan he adopted, he expected to destroy German military organization and German military might and also a large number of German personnel. In other words, according to Eisenhower, the great battle which would decide the fate of the war was fought on a wide front on the Rhine itself.

Completed on February 10th, this plan had to be delayed two weeks, as it was realized that it was possible for the Germans to flood the Ruhr. He confessed those were the two most anxious weeks he had. He then went on to explain the plan in detail, which he did with such simplicity that he appeared to be moving armies in his mind with the same ease with which one plays around with

chips at a roulette table. He told us that a quarter of a million German prisoners had been captured in the battle of the Rhine between March 1st and the date of his press conference, which was March 28th. He said: 'You can see what a quarter of a million men would have meant to the German Army east of the Rhine, had they been available now.'

General Eisenhower went on to explain how the defeat of Germans was achieved. 'Team-work wins wars,' he said. He explained how in his dictionary there was no such thing as air-support for ground. It was all one war: ground, sea and air.

It was evident from the importance of the Ruhr that any line which the German would fall back upon would not have access to the Ruhr and, therefore, would lack the materials necessary for war. Silesia, the Saar and the Ruhr were each important to Germany. Without them it was impossible for Germany to continue the war. At the same time the rest of the campaign would not be a walk-over. 'There will be some darn tough fighting before it's over. I know their main defensive line has been broken, but that does not mean all our difficulties are over.'

Where exactly that tough fighting was to be expected, he did not say. But there was no German power which could withstand our forces where our maintenance would allow us to operate. Nor was it possible for Germany to switch forces over from one front to another.

In answer to questions he was asked at the end of his speech, he said: 'Crossing the Rhine has gone much quicker and has been much less costly

than we expected.' He also said: 'I think the Ardennes offensive was the costliest mistake the Germans have made since their decision to stand in face of our Avranches breakthrough.'

Eisenhower found it difficult to fathom the German mind. He could not, for instance, understand why when the German knew of the Russian drive on the east, he still brought over his forces from the east to the west. He commented: 'I don't know whom Germans consider their worst enemy.'

There never was any use appealing to German reason. It just was not there. The only language the German understood was force and the only verdict he eventually accepted was crushing defeat.

So ended the Supreme Commander's Press Conference.

Dressed immaculately with five little stars in a circle on his shoulder-strap and wearing the flash of SHAEF, with his thin lips so full of expression and his wide sweep of forehead, he looked the perfect picture of a Supreme Commander. When he had finished, he smoked a Camel cigarette. His power of relaxation was as perfect as his power of concentration.

With six Allied armies piercing into the heart of Germany, utter rout appeared to have set in. Events were moving too fast to be reported thoroughly and breakthroughs on various sectors of the Rhine front were so rapid that bomblines were reported to be changing every 20 minutes. Whatever enemy movement had been spotted by Allied pilots

operating across the Rhine appeared to be moving eastwards in complete confusion.

The British Second Army had made a spectacular dash between Bochold and Dorsten. There was a noticeable weakening of German resistance north of the Lippe river. Pilots of the 83rd group confirmed having seen a rapidly retreating enemy column. The 'Autobahn', which was a great concrete highway running parallel to the Rhine, had been crossed at several places.

But the American Ninth Army, which was fighting slightly south of the British Second was encountering stiff opposition which was understandable in view of its proximity to the precious Ruhr region. The Ninth Army had already reached Waldteich which on the map is a stone's throw from Duisburg which is in the top west corner of the Ruhr.

While the Ninth appeared to have turned its attention to the Ruhr, the British Second was flying uninterruptedly eastwards. Once the bridgehead behind the British Second was secured there was nothing to stem its onslaught right upto the Ems river. On the south side of the Ruhr, the American First Army controlled a 50 mile wide front. The sharp arrows of its thrust appeared to be turning down in the direction of Frankfurt.

There appeared to be a link-up between the armies from then on. Patton's Third Army was the spearhead of a thrust south of the Ruhr. SHAEF would not specify or pinpoint its most forward position, but Patton appeared to have gone north-east of Aschaffenburg in the direction of the Spessant range. It was obvious that the Spessant range, which was a

big mass of forest and hill, could hardly be the objective. The way Patton would turn would indicate the purpose of the Allied offensive. As if only by the way, a sizeable town like Frankfurt was being picked up as if it was a raisin in a plum pudding.

Frankfurt had a population of 550,000 and was the commercial and industrial capital of Upper Rhineland. It was the centre of the German Chemical Industry. There were also large Engineering Works, though after continual Allied plastering from the air it was doubtful if they would still exist. From the time the war began up to March 1945, Frankfurt had had nearly 16,000 tons of bombs dropped on it, and more than half of it had been devastated. Allied columns were now fighting in Frankfurt's southern suburbs and entering the city was only a question of time. It looked as if Montgomery would swing down after reaching the top of the Ruhr and the armies south of the Ruhr would swing up, thus sealing the whole area.

Supporting the Third Army on its southern flank was the American Seventh. The Seventh's direction also appeared to be north-eastwards. Concentration round Aschaffenburg was great in comparison to its importance.

The story was told at SHAEF of the entry of the Seventh Army into a village whose defenders apparently were only two German policemen. A few white flags appeared as the Americans neared the village. After a little persuasion these two German policemen decided to direct traffic for the Americans. This was the only light touch in the otherwise grim story which emerged from Germany.

Germans were getting so confused and so

panic-stricken they did not know which way to turn. Between the Rhine and the eastern front, where the Russians were waiting for an opportunity to strike, there was only a 200-mile gap. This Anglo-American-Russian sandwich would have crushed German meat inside. It was something which had to be seen from close quarters to be believed. Any moment now, the Ruhr would be isolated from the rest of the Reich, a Nazi graveyard, a tomb wherein would lie buried the last German hopes of dominating the world.

With the closing of the Ruhr, the American Ninth, First and Third Armies could sweep over the rest of Germany without any fear of the enemy being strengthened in material resources. It was thought possible that the German troops encircled within the Ruhr would try to fight their way out either at one point or in a small perimeter, but it was certain that if they attempted this, it would only be suicidal.

Meanwhile, Allied bombers were already softening the area between Munster and Paderborn. Allied bombing was so close to our forward lines that often there was a minimum margin of safety. The advances were so great that literally thousands of prisoners were being taken and it became quite a transport problem to send these prisoners back. The advance was so rapid that Allied Headquarters at Paris found it difficult to assimilate the various messages as they came in. The officer incharge of the map in our War Room was constantly moving the positions.

On the other side of the Rhine, the American Seventh Army had a big day with its armour

breaking loose through open country south of Aschaffenburg towards Würzburg. Earlier, the area west of Würzburg had been methodically 'softened' by our bombers. Even the French First Army had now crossed the Rhine, we were told at our daily briefing, which produced a slight smile on the faces of War Correspondents, except those few French War correspondents who took it very seriously.

There was no indication of what Germany would do in the face of this powerful force which was sweeping over it. The point was, as it seemed to us at that time, that there was no authority in anyone other than in the Nazi Party to surrender. To expect the Nazis to surrender was to expect them to provide a rope with which to hang themselves. They knew that they were defeated. They knew that the end had come, but it was only human, in view of Allied determination to accept nothing less than unconditional surrender, to expect the Nazis to fight on till death came to them. The tragedy was that while they were dying themselves, they were also bringing death to a whole nation.



*THE FRENCH SCENE*

The month of March was over and as April appeared on the calendar we saw the first signs of life. Spring was in the air. April 2nd was a great day in France for it was the day on which she celebrated with due pomp and ceremony the return of her once lost liberty.

That day I saw the rebirth of a nation. I saw new life born to a people who had smarted under the German occupation for four long years. I saw the spirit of free France, once shamed into defeat, resurrected from that darkest pit. I saw a new flame lighted on Napoleon's Tomb. In the crypt of the chapel of the Palais des Invalides and on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier under the Arc de Triomphe I saw that new flame lighted also in the hearts of the free people of France. I saw, for the first time, the France for which General de Gaulle had fought.

In the Place de la Concorde, De Gaulle gave back to the French regiments those colours which had been hidden from the enemy during the occupation. When all seemed lost he had had faith that France would yet survive, and that a people whose blood had flowed for the cause of freedom would never die. 'France has lost a battle,' he said on one memorable occasion, 'it has not lost the war.'

We saw him that day in the Place de la

Concorde and if the enthusiasm of the French people was any indication, it appeared as if France had accepted once and for all a new leader. Constitutionally he was only the president of the provisional government, but on April 2nd, 1945, he was France itself.

As I went through the streets, the Rue Royale, the Madeleine and the Boulevard des Capucines, right up and beyond the Opera, saw the people lined up twenty-thirty, for the march past, heard the French applaud their fighting men with quiet dignity and saw them salute in silence the standards beneath which so many had fallen, I understood then more clearly than ever what the return of freedom could mean to people.

While their Government had allowed the Germans to enter their land, the common people of France had refused to let the Boche enter their hearts. These were the people of that greater resistance movement of the mind and heart—the movement which functioned in occupied France within the Nazi stranglehold. These were the people who carried on the revolution long after France was occupied.

Marching in step to the music of their ancestors, to the strains of *Sambre et Meuse*, their arms swinging in unison, they celebrated their liberation. From above, you could see a sea of humanity and just a gentle ruffle of human waves. Dark blue berets were cocked on one side, dull green khaki helmets, long great coats, Browning rifles in every row slung over the right shoulder, the turbans of the Morrocans, the white caps of the Foreign Legion, the picturesque uniforms of Les

Gardes Republicans and even the stranger head gear of the Goumiets. As one of the marching brass bands played '*Die for the Republique*' the crowds lifted their voices, for the people were always ready to sing or die. This tune was played by the Morrocans, the dark race of the French Republic. I will not say Empire.

My early enthusiasm for De Gaulle could not long be sustained. I think that history will show that the legend built around De Gaulle was too big for the man. De Gaulle, as a symbol of a France which would not accept the German occupation was quite different from the little bourgeois into which he turned soon after the liberation. Perhaps at heart De Gaulle always was a bourgeois and a conservative. He had believed that those of his countrymen who resisted the Germans from inside France, were men of his own social class, the conservative backbone of the country. But when he entered Paris and realized that the men who had followed him from afar were the common people, often even the rabble, he seemed to be uncomfortable with his followers. Consequently, he was a great disappointment to those Frenchmen who had answered his call and who had pictured him as something different from that smug and proper militarist, which was all he was.

More than De Gaulle, it was the Maquis which symbolized the spirit of Renaissant France. Somehow not much appeared in the press about the Maquis at that time, for when material on this

subject was available, other things claimed priority in the columns of the world press. Exclusively available for SHAEF War Correspondents, was a mass of documented evidence collected since D-Day, which told an unbelievable story of German terrorism in France. The evidence in these documents piled before us was first hand. The German determination to crush French underground resistance made this story more gruesome than all the crime put together in the history of civilization.

Each incident was reported in these documents only when it had been corroborated and vouched for. We had before us some thirteen large mimeographed volumes of reported cases, complete with the sworn testimony of witnesses and illustrated with photographs. So broad was the canvas on which the Nazi sadists worked that it is impossible to concentrate their extensive terror into a few pages here.

The term 'Maquis' was originally used in Corsica to designate wild uplands, which are the traditional haunts of brigands. Young Frenchmen obliged to go into hiding to avoid conscription for labour in Germany, adopted the same term for their underground movement. These were men who were 'Wanted by the Gestapo.' They were counted not in ones and twos but in groups of over a hundred. These guerilla units were called 'Maquisards.' They contrived to arm themselves with guns stolen from Germans, or with what came their way through Allied parachute operations.

In so far as they offered resistance to the German Army of Occupation it was not unexpected that the Germans would deal with them sternly. No captured 'Maquis' was expected to go back alive;

even as an espionage agent in any country would not expect mercy. But the Nazi method was to punish the innocent. As reprisal, the Germans burnt down farms and whole villages on the slightest provocation. The inhabitants of whole areas would be shot at sight just because some successful 'Maquis' operation had taken place in the nearby locality. Hostages had been shot by the thousand. The 'Maquisards' were not merely shot. They were beaten and tortured with incredible ferocity. Everywhere there had been systematic pillaging.

When the Allied invasion of the Continent began, a new sort of atrocity appeared on the scene. Furious at being driven out by the Allied armies, the Germans wreaked vengeance on the French population. They shot indiscriminately and on sight men, women and even children. Often when the Germans were forced to withdraw they would come back to the village and find the French celebrating their liberation. A general massacre would follow. The French authorities of the Provincial Government estimated political executions during the occupation at the figure of 150,000. This did not include many thousands who came within the nebulous term 'deported'. In order to leave no evidence of their Gestapo methods it was simpler to kill the maimed and mutilated than to let them loose.

The following is a sample of the Gestapo methods, reported to have taken place at the torture chamber of Feldgendarmérie of Plouaret which is in Cotes Du Nord. The Gestapo group here was one of the most brutal in the region. Its ferocity redoubled after April 1944 and is said to have instituted a veritable reign of terror.

Night and day police trucks roamed the streets and new arrests were continually made by the Gestapo. The Germans called their torture chamber 'the laboratory'. Those arrested were taken every day to this 'laboratory' from which they came out hours later in a pitiable condition. Their faces were swollen to terrible proportions. Some could hardly stagger along as they dragged their bruised and broken limbs. Others were unable to walk and were carried back to prison unconscious. This 'treatment' in the 'laboratory' was given to the victims daily until some sort of a confession of complicity with the 'Maquis' or information about others involved in the Underground Movement was extorted from them. Or, as it often happened, till the victim succumbed. Those who died on the spot were buried in the neighbourhood in hidden trenches. Some who resisted were sent off to St. Brieuc to be shot. Many were kept in Plouaret undergoing a fortnight's course at the 'laboratory'.

Witnesses are available in France today to testify to these stories. The cries of the victims of the 'laboratory' all day and night were heard as far as 800 metres away.

The following is the account of an incident as recounted by a victim who still survives :

He spoke of a certain day when interrogations were going on upstairs. The sound of blows and cries could be heard by him. Some hours later the victim treated in the 'laboratory' came downstairs. He was thrown down the stairway with his hands tied so tightly behind his back that his wrists were cut and bleeding. He was beaten with a whip called 'Nerf de Boeuf' which was the whip of

raw hide used by the Gestapo. He was also kicked in all parts of the body. The German Sergeant, whose nickname was Albert, was a terror of this camp. Albert twisted the victim's ear till blood ran from it and the victim screamed in a frightful manner.

The next victim came down with his right eye hanging from its socket and the left eye completely closed. His teeth were broken and his nose flattened.

The next man had been severely beaten but his face was untouched. Albert noticed this. He kicked the victim on the ankle and then ordered him to take off his shoes. The sergeant then crushed the man's toes by stamping on them with his ironshod boots and then hammered the man's face with fist blows till it bled all over. Albert then took the victim by the hair and smashed the man's face against the wall till his nose was flat and his teeth fell out.

In this torture chamber a butcher's hook was found hanging from the bier on which victims were hung for beating. They were hung here by the lower jaw.

Five bodies uncovered in the immediate vicinity of the Feldgendarmerie had been identified and the reports and statements showed that the marks on their bodies corroborated the declarations made by the survivors.

The German idea underlying the torture was to instil into friend and foe the need for respect for authority. It was the same theory as the Germans enunciated in the 'Baptism of Fire', a German propaganda movie which we saw. Often the bodies

were left hanging in town squares for 72 hours and there was a death penalty imposed on anyone whose humanity might tempt him to take the body down for burial before the allotted time had passed. Hangings were common. In fact they appeared almost civilized in comparison to other methods used by the Gestapo.

Among the documents available are several pictures of mutilated corpses uncovered and photographed for evidence which showed the sheer ferocity of the Gestapo's punishment.

Evidence of this form of punishment came from the Gestapo at Quai Leon at Marlaix. There was the evidence of Dr. Quinton, a prison doctor, to testify to this. At Quai Leon the victim on his arrival was violently hit on the face and made to crouch on the ground with his hands tied together. A stick was then passed over his elbows and under his knees, anchoring him in this position. This victim would now receive his first thrashing. Then the victim would be forced to lie down, face downwards, on a table with his legs hanging down. His trousers would be pulled down or, in the case of women the skirt would be raised, and the victim would then be beaten with a club made of rubber, four centimetres in diameter, till the victim fainted with pain. The victim was then brought back to consciousness by plunging the head in a bath of icecold water. The 'treatment' would be repeated three or four times according to the endurance of the individual. Among those so treated a few are still living today. Their names were given as Madame Cezaire, Madame Le Jane and Mademoiselle Kerennuer, all from the same



locality at Morlaix. Their pictures supported the doctor's evidence.

Trevidic was a young man whose treatment went further. Over and above the regular beating repeated after revival in icecold bath, Trevidic was given a special kind of 'treatment'. Two Gestapo men took sadistic delight in beating on his genital organs with a rubber club one and a half centimetre diameter till the organs offered a frightful sight. Said Dr. Quinton: 'His testicles were the size of a football and quite black.'

All sorts of instruments came to light which told a story unbelievable to us according to standards of civilization.

The Nazis had regular apparatus, the idea of which was often borrowed from the mediaeval days. There were instruments like finger-crushers, electric helmets, petrol baths, iodine injections and all sorts of carefully thought-out and planned apparatus such as you would find only in a surgery. These men were killers. Their photographs showed that they had tasted blood. Their eyes were those of murderers. Their thin lips were of the sadist type. The Maquis tasted all this and more, never stopping to look up any rules on the subject.

When I thought of France in terms of the Maquis, my enthusiasm for De Gaulle waned somewhat. He seemed a little petty in the France which had known the occupation.

Even though De Gaulle was very much in the forefront of that ceremony on April 2nd, with every shop window displaying a large photograph of him, I knew that De Gaulle would not last long in France. A far stronger undercurrent would one day

sweep the country, and the newly framed pictures of General de Gaulle would disappear from the show windows just as soon as the shops in Paris had some merchandise to put in them. And that is exactly what happened.

the fall of Nazi Germany. With bated breath we waited for the flash which would say that the Germans had surrendered. When the Rhine was lost to the Germans, there was little hope for them. At long last Allied soldiers could really hang their washing on the Siegfried Line, which now lay far behind them. The only other line on which the Germans could make a stand appeared to be the Elms River, for north-east of the Ruhr was the important town of Bremen.

The story of German defeat was one of the most pathetic stories ever to be told. Right up to the very end a strange sort of discipline sustained them. It was not as if they had faith, for all faith and hope was lost. But that Nazi discipline which had been drilled into them and servile obedience to Fascist dictatorship made them stand up and fight to the very last.

From our point of view this was a bad sign. It meant that the Nazi machine which had proved itself so inhuman in the hour of its first victory would be equally inhuman in defeat. The men who stood between the Allied armies and what was still left of Germany, were not men with human minds and human emotions. They were really morons in uniform. They were being exterminated by the thousands and perhaps they had to be so exterminated, for many were diseased rats. But behind them there was still the people of Germany and in the last critical hour, the people rallied behind their fighting men, calling themselves the Volkstrum, the Nazi Home Guard.

When I asked myself the question, 'Is all Germany Nazi?', I had to admit that it was. One

could see even then that the Allied armies of occupation would have to remain in Germany many years after the war was over—till the present generation of Germans had passed away and a new generation and a new life was born there. The danger was that in the frame of mind in which the Germans were at that time, another sort of Nazi party would rise in Germany out of the bitterness of the German people.

The rest of the world could not afford to lose its men and possessions merely because the Germans periodically menaced the peace of the world. It had happened already twice within a quarter of a century. With all the mercy one would like to show to human beings, the Nazi frame of mind, if it were allowed to persist, would be most dangerous to the world. In the hour of defeat, the Germany of World War II was different from the Germany of World War I. In this war the Germans fought to the bitter end with a fanaticism which was unbelievable. This mad patriotism would have been more admired had it been for a cause which was worth while. Perhaps to the Germans the cause did appear worth while.

The American Ninth Army's armoured spear-head had now reached the Elbe River at Magdeburg. The next halt could only be Berlin, 58 miles away. The American Ninth Army which crossed the Rhine under Field Marshal Montgomery's command now reverted to the command of General Bradley. The terrain which was crossed by the Ninth was called the borderland of Hanover-Magdeburg. The Ninth went south of the main Brunswick-Berlin road, which passed through Magdeburg, meeting at first with some opposition at Wolfenbüttel, where the famous

Goering Steel Works were situated. But once the opposition was overcome, the Americans broke loose along the 50 mile stretch to the Elbe River.

Magdeburg was the largest town in the Prussian province of Saxony. Its population was 320,000. It was an important industrial centre, vital to Germany's war production. It was also an important communications centre, having a railway junction and inland harbour facilities. Magdeburg offered little resistance and the only delay in getting to Berlin was caused by the infantry which took time to catch up with the armoured spearheads. They secured a firm bridgehead across the Elbe. At SHAEF, however, we felt that doughnuts would soon be cooked in the Eden Hotel in Berlin, and over Berlin radio, from which for over twelve years we had heard the voice of Paul Joseph Goebels, we would shortly hear a jam session of American jazz.

The strain of the whole war seemed to relax at SHAEF at the news of the fall of Magdeburg and for the first time in the history of war, war correspondents were seen 'fraternising' with the censors.

While the fall of Magdeburg was important strategically, it was the fall of Berlin which was regarded as the great psychological factor in the war. Berlin was still the heart of Nazi Germany and the storm centre of German resistance. Berlin appeared ready to fall. Then at long last, after five long years of blood, sweat and toil and tears, one of the bloodiest wars in history would end.

To the men who had endured hardships and made the greatest sacrifices, it felt like the end of a long crusade. In this war, men had fought for many

things and often their minds had been confused, but the great mass of ordinary people had fought for the right to live decently in a free world.

The mood of the common man of the countries once overrun by the Germans was reflected by a Belgian restaurant manager in Brussels. I had stopped at his restaurant on one of my short hops from SHAEF and at a table next to mine I saw a small group of shabby children lunching together. They were not accompanied by anyone. I asked the manager who they were and how they could afford to eat there. He said: 'They are war orphans whom we have fed for four years. Almost every eating house does the same. So long as there is food in this house they shall have it by right. Their fathers fought for the freedom I now enjoy.'

When I returned to Paris later that day I saw the route outside the airfield lined with hundreds of French people. Their mood appeared anxious and sombre. It was a common sight, I was told. Every evening they would come like that and go away and come again the next day. 'But what are they waiting for?' I asked.

'They wait for the men who are returning from Germany.'

'From Germany?'

'From the concentration camps.'

What an unforgettable homecoming that was!

At Soest at the edge of the Ruhr pocket some four thousand French officers, who had been prisoners of war, were just liberated. This number constituted about one sixth of the entire officer personnel of the French Army. An American major who was the first Allied officer to enter the camp

told me he had seen some of the most touching scenes on the liberation of that camp. The rations of these men for many long months had been three potatoes per day per person, 500 grams of turnips and 200 grams of bread. Yet their first thoughts on being liberated were about their people. They hungered for news of the outside world. In the early days of their captivity they had managed to keep in touch with news by means of carefully hidden radio sets, but after a while these sets had ceased to function, leaving them without any news of the rest of the world. They said that they had not received a single Red Cross package since the Normandy landings. Hungry and half starved as they were on the day of liberation, their first act was to hoist Allied flags where the black swastika had flown.

All the national anthems were played by improvised orchestras made up of violins, violas and other available instruments. 'When the Marseillaise was played', the major said, 'it practically lifted me off my feet. I looked at the French sentry presenting arms and saw tears rolling down his cheeks. I nearly felt like crying myself!' Such were the scenes in Europe on the eve of the fall of Berlin.

About April 17th, late in the evening, I filed my first message with the dateline, INSIDE GERMANY.

The Germany I saw that day from near the Belgium border up to Essen on the north-eastern corner of the Ruhr was just one wide gaping

desolation. Whole towns were wiped out street by street, alley by alley, house by house. Often there was no landmark left except the pre-war signs, which were still hanging from the dilapidated walls. There was not a single plant, not a factory, not a bridge, nor a railyard which remained ungutted.

Along the Rhine and across it, I could see only a long stretch of crumbled masonry. Bare iron girders made strange meccano patterns against the sky. This had to be seen to be believed.

Cassino, horrible as it had appeared, was but child's play in comparison with this German scene of devastation. Allied bombing had left an indelible mark on the face of Germany. It would take whole generations of Germans to wipe it off. So systematically had Germany been bombed in that area, that only the bare earth and fields and wide open spaces remained as the heritage of the surviving German people. Dead was the Germany which was to dominate the world and cast its spell from Berlin to Baghdad. The twenty-seven years toil and labour that went into the rebuilding of Germany after Versailles lay wasted before them. All that hard work lay in crumbled ruins leaving the defeated Germans once again with nothing more than the bare *Vaterland*.

Germany was horrid, deathly, ghostly. There was a terrifying silence about the place and the only sign of animation was that of people digging among the ruins. Yet strangely there were no signs of poverty or hunger. There was no look of defeat on the faces of the Germans. They were not bent or bowed like the Italians. Their arrogance and pride had not stooped and they walked over the face of



that 'scorched earth', which was their land, as if they were still the supermen of the Third Reich. They had grown up between two wars only to be hardened by each defeat. They were not sad and they were not sorry. 'This land is still ours,' they seemed to say as they walked over it leisurely, viewing the surrounding desolation. They were completely unaware of the implications of their defeat and of what awaited them when the war was over. They had not yet known what was going to happen when winter came and their bread queues got longer and longer. They had not yet had time to understand what it would be like to live under occupation for many long years and to have to rebuild the homes of others, which their vandalism had destroyed, before they would be allowed to rebuild their own. They rather believed that their suffering had ended. In reality, it had not yet begun.

The majority of Germans I met were innocent of atrocities that had been committed in their name by Nazi Germany. They had never heard of those mass-murders people spoke about. They sincerely believed that clearing out Jews was necessary for the rebuilding of the German nation. They had done nothing wrong. It was difficult not to feel sorry for them.

Between towns, there were still long stretches of beautiful countryside. Over them, nature spread its canvas for man to behold : green fields patterned with gold mustard crops. Then would come the next town and in sharp contrast, there reappeared sombre, grey, silent ruins. The only men one saw were old men, who leaned unconcernedly against shattered walls. They had seen it all once before,

They were not surprised at seeing it again. They smoked pipes as if Germany were at peace and all was quiet in the world.

The old women of Germany were not haggard. They were wiry and hardy. There was colour in their cheeks. Their snow-white or grey hair was neatly combed. Their black dresses or coats were trimly worn. The younger women did not look tired or dishevelled. They seemed ever ready to bear more blonde Aryans to the greater glory of their Fatherland. Notwithstanding what they had endured, they were still as beautiful as ever. There was character in their faces.

I saw German children everywhere. Amidst ruins, they played little games of hide-and-seek. They were a little afraid of Allied soldiers and they did not come, like Italian children, begging for chocolate or chewing-gum. They were a disciplined lot and war had only been a normal incident in their lives. They had known nothing else but war in the few years they had lived.

We reached Essen. There was nothing left of Essen to see. From end to end it had been gutted, having been mercilessly bombed till not even a single habitation had remained untouched by bomb and blast. Here was the great Krupps Works, once the pride of German war production. Not one single square inch of Krupps remained intact, not one single square inch. All that once-imposing armament plant was then just so much twisted iron and powdered cement. Outside, at the entrance to the great Krupps Plant, stood the statue of the founder, Alfred Krupp who lived from 1812 to 1887 and who provided Bismarck with armaments to win the

Franco-Prussian war. His successor tried to win the war for Hitler. Allied bombers over the Krupps Plant did not spare the founder either, for his bronze statue was knocked off from the base and lay in a crater deep down in the earth. What an end for Alfred Krupp!

From the top of the crater, I could see him there below, still clutching his Prussian hat and gloves, his left hand resting with dignity on his hip, still wearing his victorian frock-coat and his Wellington boots. Only his cravat was dusty. Krupp's work was done. He would never rise from that pit again. He had fallen with his life's work which had wrought so much destruction and brought so much sorrow to the people of the world. The mediaeval figure, apparently of a war-god, which was at Krupp's feet below the statue, had its mouth torn wide open by Allied shrapnel. His day was also over.

So we left Krupps and Essen and back again through the gloom of the Ruhr. Small bread-lines appeared for the first time on that ugly scene. They were only the beginning of those longer, greater queues, which were soon to line up throughout the length and breadth of Germany.

Back again we went across the Rhine and open green country, over which the sun shone. Once along the road, I saw an old man of 60 and a young boy of 8 together pushing a little cart. There was a generation between them which was missing.

The next day I moved further into Germany and stayed for the night in an old inn not

from the Weser River. It was a beautiful spot on a small hill surrounded by tall pine trees, commanding a Teutonic panorama such as I had not seen before. But for the landmarks of war which I passed on the 175 mile road along which I drove that day, it would have been difficult to believe that I was in a country at war and so close to the front. But the landmarks were unmistakably real. They presented some of the most staggering sights I had seen. Haltern, Munster, Osnabruck were in utter ruins. The devastation had been so complete that nothing had escaped Allied bombing except a few isolated farm houses on the outskirts of these big towns.

In Munster there once lived some 150,000 people. When we reached it at noon that day, there was not a living soul in sight, except a German policeman who saluted me as he passed. He felt uncomfortable saluting in the democratic way for he had too long been accustomed to salute with an uplifted right arm. His arm-band now read: 'Military Government Police'.

Nobody could tell me where the people of these three big towns had disappeared. Emptiness made them appear strangely haunted. There was no sign of movement, for mangled stone, iron and mortar do not move. There was also no evidence of life—not a bird nor even a rat could be seen in those war-stricken towns.

As I looked across the Rhine that morning, my eyes fell on the tall chimneys of the Ruhr. They were smokeless. The industrial heart of Germany had ceased to beat. Somewhere in this cold and dead area, I saw a slogan of Hitler's emblazoned

over the gates of a munition factory. It read: 'Give me five years and I will give you a different Germany.'

Different it certainly was. And how different! As the Germans looked at it, they covered their faces with their hands, partly in shame and partly in horror.

Our transport stopped on one of the highways to make way for the stream of trucks which were bringing back German prisoners by hundreds from the front.

They passed through the little town in a funeral procession, the women weeping on the roadside and little German children looking dazedly on. For the first time I saw white flags hanging from the windows of people's houses. They were flags of shame and defeat. At the sound of overhead planes, the Germans would look up instantly and get frightened. Then they would remember that the planes were not bombing them any more and they would walk on. But the frightened look on faces would not change.

Somewhere along the road I saw a large effigy of Christ on the cross. Little white flowers had grown at his feet, the only evidence of colour in those otherwise drab, sombre surroundings. A German woman dressed in black halted before the cross. She knelt humbly. Her head was bowed. Our transport did not wait for her to rise from the ground for the signs along the road said 'Keep Moving.'

News came to our forward press camp to say that the British Second Army, which had recently

captured Soltau, had entered the S.S. concentration camp at Bergenbelsen, a few miles south-east of Soltau. The first British armoured car had moved in. Some of us, therefore, hurried to this camp to see it at first hand.

While the scenes I witnessed during the Bengal famine were pitiful, I have seen nothing in all my life which has shocked me with such horror and disgust as this concentration camp, tucked away behind the woods on the road to Soltau.

I had heard of the horrible atrocities said to have been committed by the Nazis against their political enemies. I had heard Jews speak of their sufferings in these camps. I had heard the stories of Nazi atrocities told time and again. They were stories which it had been difficult to believe. Belsen went far beyond them. It was the absolute last word in inhumanity.

In a camp encaged by barbed wire, there had been interned since the beginning of the war, some 40,000 human beings, mostly Jews, Poles and Russians, who had stood in the way of Nazi domination of the world. When we entered it that afternoon it was typhus-ridden. Men and women had died there, before we came, as plentifully and in as pathetic a manner as little insects die after hovering round a lamp. In the month before the Allied armies arrived on the scene, 18,000 had died from starvation. The cremation chamber was unable to cope with the dead, with the result that this method of disposal was discarded and more practical methods were resorted to by the Nazis.

They just dug a huge pit in the camp itself and

pushed in the dead. All around the camp, on the very ground I walked, men and women had been buried by hundreds. Nor was this an exaggeration, for with my own eyes I saw a large pile of corpses still undisposed of. There were about 200 naked dead bodies of men and women lying in a heap on the ground. Through starvation, those who survived had eaten the heart and the kidneys of the dead and there were slight gashes which could be seen on nearly every corpse on the pile. The stench was awful. I shall never forget it as long as I live, nor will any one of those war correspondents who smelt Belsen that day.

I have often used the expression 'Scrapheap of humanity'. I saw it realistically that day—the actual sight of a pile of naked human corpses, the emaciated bodies of men and women lying unashamed on each other. Several hours after I saw this scene I still continued to feel sick and nauseated by the sight.

The camp at Belsen was sadist. It was the Nazi idea of punishment. It was cold blooded. It is not possible to describe adequately in words the horror of this ugly scene of human mutilation, of men lying dead over a small area of earth, due to starvation and brutality, which was inflicted on them merely because they were Jews or because their political convictions were contrary to the tenets of Nazism. In the last stages of life, they lay all over the place, completely oblivious of their liberation. They did not seem to care whether they were enslaved or free. No one was shocked at the nakedness of the place, for this they told me was a daily sight.

The Nazis had provided no sanitary arrangements, leaving the people to excrete where they lived. This was part of that mental torture which the Nazis believed would cause the gradual demoralization of the internees.

The men I saw before my eyes were a shadow of their former selves. It was human degradation in the lowest form. God alone knows what had happened to their souls. While I stood and watched, I saw twelve corpses dragged out from corners of the camp, where they had remained unnoticed. One lay at my feet and I nearly trod on it. It was the corpse of a young man so emaciated that there was nothing left of him except bare skin and bone. I was not sure whether he was dead or alive. His body was like alabaster, cold and white. No one knew who he was. Then they tied his legs together with a long piece of cloth and through the thick dust on the ground, he was dragged, his face scraping against the earth, to be put on the pile of dead. A few yards away, another man lay naked and dead. No one from the internees seemed to be shocked, but the Allied officers and war correspondents who had never seen anything like this, were stunned.

So great was the hunger during the last days of the Nazi regime that every single blade of grass had been eaten right up to arm's length of the encircling barbed wire.

As I stood there watching, a tall Jew came up to me and asked me if I had a newspaper with me. He wanted to know what was happening in the outside world. That was all he wanted; not food, not a drink, not a cigarette, but just



news of the world. There were many cultured and once genteel people amongst those who were interned in Belsen. It was difficult to tell them apart, for Hitler had herded them like cattle and destroyed them like vermin. If ever I had felt that perhaps Germany deserves mercy, the sight of Belsen changed my opinion. Those who were capable of perpetrating such crimes are not fit to live in this world. Shooting was too good for them. They should have been left to the internees to be flayed alive.

I moved north-west to a small village close to the allied front line in the Hamburg sector. When I arrived at this village it was evening. The press camp had only just moved into a wayside inn not far from which British tanks were still carrying out mopping up operations. As we sat on the doorstep of the inn, sipping hot tea, some of the tanks were returning from the day's operations. Perched on them, like mascots, were odd German prisoners.

The day before had been Hitler's birthday and Dr. Goebbels in one of his usual speeches had assured the German people that the Fuhrer would ultimately lead them to victory. Even the Germans who lived on this side of the Elbe river had illusions about victory. Speaking to an intelligent, young German officer in this village, I found it difficult to convince him of what I had seen at Belsen. No one seemed to know what had happened inside Germany, not even the Germans themselves. The Nazi machine had worked wonders with the morale of the German people. The theory of the Master Race was engrained in their souls. It would be difficult to uproot. I do not think that even th

British or the American, or for that matter any one else understood the meaning of Nazism, until they entered Germany and saw the concentration camps with their own eyes. An English major said to me after Belsen: 'For the first time I understand what the hell I'm fighting for.'

This little village in which I spent the night had been in German hands two days before. Now, while we had captured it, we had not quite moved in. So, with a German speaking interpreter I went around to see the little townspeople of this village and called at several houses. These were intelligent, middle class Germans, the backbone of Germany. Their homes were spick-and-span, clean, well-appointed, well-furnished. They had good crockery, cutlery and glassware. The things in the house were in tasteful design. It was surprising to find houses like these in such a small village. In one of them, there was a German airman who had been wounded over France in a dog-fight. He had lost a leg. He was a young man, just over thirty, a typical blond type with wavy hair and blue eyes. He wore a stern Prussian look. His jaw was firm. When the British arrived, he gave himself up as a prisoner of war, but because of his wounded condition, the English let him remain where he was in his sister-in-law's house, and told him to give himself up to the military government when it arrived there. The trouble really was that the allies could hardly cope with individual prisoners of war.

At first the young German resented my presence but later he became friendly when he discovered I was a war correspondent and especially when he knew that I was an Indian. He was a regular soldier of

the Wehrmacht and belonged to the German luftwaffe. I asked him how he felt about the turn of events. He shrugged his shoulders and replied : 'It is too bad for us.'

'Were you very surprised when the British attacked this village?' I asked.

'They have a very powerful armour,' he quietly replied.

The emphasis on the armour as opposed to the men had some meaning for me. The Germans had always believed that man for man, they were still superior to the allies. It was always the 'armour' which had let them down. He spoke a little English and all of a sudden he broke his outward indifference about the progress of the war by asking, 'How far is the *enemy* from Berlin?'

I gave him the latest news, at which he lifted his eyebrows. In quiet undertones he translated it to his sister-in-law, a tall, fair German girl, who was working for the German Red Cross.

'When do you think this war will be over?' I asked him.

He replied : 'Not till the last German soldier has died on the battleground.'

I told him about the Belsen camp and what I had seen. I described it in the minutest detail. The German interpreter translated as I spoke. The airman listened in silence and his sister-in-law listened also. Then the woman closed her eyes. He saw her moved, and turned to me with firmness and said : 'It is not true. I cannot believe it.'

The interpreter, who was German also, told them that he too had heard that these things had happened in Belsen.

'I cannot believe it,' the German airman repeated. 'If it were true, I should be very ashamed.'

I explained that I was not trying to reproach him as an individual. I was merely showing him how, under the Nazi state, a great majority of the German people had little idea how that state functioned.

I then asked: 'What do you think should be done to the commandant of the camp?'

He looked down but he did not reply. The interpreter then explained to me that, being a German soldier, he was on oath never to speak against his country and his people.

I asked the German airman his opinion of Hitler.

'Hitler is a man of great ideals,' he said. 'It is unfortunate that these ideals were not realised in this war.'

'Would you think Himmler knew about them?' I asked.

He did not answer. He merely shrugged his shoulders. Once again he turned to the woman and said that it was unbelievable. Still looking at her he added: 'It is very bad for us.'

He fumbled for some defence for his country and then he said to me: 'It is a pity that you have seen only the black side of the picture. You do not know what Hitler has done for the people—his winter relief, his insurance, his national socialism, which is real.'

I said I would accept all these arguments about the benefits of the regime, if he, as a soldier, could tell me what he would do to the commandant of the Belsen camp, if he were convinced of the

horrible atrocities committed in that camp. I said to him: 'Under Nazism, you never even knew of their existence. Even if you lost the benefits of national socialism and all that Hitler gave you, I am sure you will gain freedom of thought and freedom of expression, which is worth more than all your wonderful reliefs put together.'

There was a pause. In an undertone I heard him repeat to himself, 'I cannot believe it.'

I next went to the house of a schoolmaster. He had seen two wars. He was a more humble type. He said to me: 'I see the same future for Germany as I saw in 1918 and it will be worse if the Russians get here.' So strong had been the German propaganda against Russia that the Germans had a mortal fear of the Russians. The schoolmaster told me how under the Nazis, the middle school had been abolished in favour of what was called the Hitler school. Children between 10 and 14 went to the Hitler school. Here they learnt the essence of 'good Nazism'. Here they learnt how to die for the Fuhrer and how to produce blond Aryans for the greater glory of the *Vaterland*.

Late that night a hint was dropped to us that we were perhaps in the wrong part of Germany for the big news. It was even suggested that Hamburg may not be taken for a while. So we shot back to SHAEF, collecting on the road a liberated Belgian pastry-cook, whom we dropped near the Belgian border. At first he thought I was a member of the Allied 'Gestapo'. Later when he had reassured himself he produced a most beautiful sponge cake made of the best white flour which he had pinched from the Germans.

Late at night on April 28th, the rumour that the Germans were surrendering hit Paris. The Associated Press of America flashed a message saying that President Truman was getting ready to announce Germany's unconditional surrender. SHAEF had heard nothing about it officially.

A French source announced that Himmler had offered to surrender unconditionally to Britain and the U.S. Himmler had been in consultation with the Wehrmacht chiefs but the surrender was said to be without Hitler's consent. According to the same report, Himmler had declared that Hitler was dying and that he would not survive.

Checking with Washington, we learnt that President Truman had denied this rumour, but the rumour had caught on fast in Paris, where those who were returning from night clubs decided to go back into the nearest bar to celebrate this unconfirmed victory.

It was about two in the night. The empty streets began to fill up again as people rushed out of their beds in an odd assortment of clothes, frantically asking each other whether the rumour was true. American soldiers from the nearby Rainbow Room rushed out in a mad frenzy. But no one had any confirmation whatsoever.

An American soldier turned to his friend and said: 'Well, I guess the only one who'd know is Ike.'

'Let's go see Ike,' said the other.

But even Eisenhower did not know. He had already been contacted by SHAEF and he had heard nothing.

So we returned to the Scribe and sat there

in the big room where we worked and just looked at each other blankly.

My eyes fell on two American sailors who strolled into the lobby of the Scribe. They came up quietly to the American sergeant on night duty outside the room and asked him in a subdued way whether the war was over. The sergeant on duty told them that the rumour had just been denied. The sailors shook their heads and one of them made the sign of the cross and quietly they went away. There was not a trace of emotion on their faces.

A cup of hot cocoa which one of the press girls put before us was the only warm and comforting thing that night.

We went back to bed with heavy hearts.

But things were moving fast in Europe and everyday we knew we were coming nearer to the end. A little before midnight on May 4th the klaxon horn buzzed three times. It meant that a flash message would be announced within two minutes and we dashed down to the main hall to hear the news that all the German forces in Holland, north-west Germany and Denmark, including Heligoland and the Frisian islands had surrendered to Montgomery's 21st Army Group. It was a battlefield surrender.

Five times during the next day the klaxon tooted three buzzes and the atmosphere at the Scribe was one of excitement and jubilation. We never stirred out of the hotel during the next three days which were some of the most exciting days we spent

and some of the hardest we worked. Because of the time lag between the various countries, pressmen were awake at all hours of the night and again in the day, to keep pace with the European scene which was changing fast. Often it was not possible for the man servicing the agencies, who catered for spot news, even to have a bath for fear of being caught in the tub at the next news break.

Finally word trickled through to the Scribe that there was a story to break at General Eisenhower's headquarters, and that same night some 20 or 30 War Correspondents were seen making the 100 mile dash in whatever form of transport they could get—planes, trucks, Paris taxis, and jeeps.

It was a cold night as our jeep sped across the French countryside which was peacefully at sleep. None of the people in the villages we passed were aware that within a few hours Germany would, for the second time, surrender.

When we arrived at Rheims it was nearly midnight. The Public Relations Department had lived up to its usual reputation and bungled, as it had on every important occasion. The arrangements made for the press were most unsatisfactory. We waited on the pavement hour after hour for the news to break. Around 2 o'clock Air Marshal Tedder arrived in his Rolls-Royce and then General Bedell-Smith who was General Eisenhower's Chief of Staff. The Russians came and the French and finally the Germans, led by General Jodl who was signing on behalf of the Germans as the representative of Admiral Doenitz.

When it was all over Jodl stood in the War Room in which he signed and in a voice choked with emotion



said : 'With this signature the German people and the German armed forces are, for better or worse, delivered into the victor's hands. In this war which has lasted more than five years, both (meaning the German people and the German Army) have achieved and suffered more than perhaps any other people in the world. In this hour I can only express the hope that the victor will treat them with generosity.'

So ended the war in Europe, midst only the sigh of a lonely train in Rheims railway station, and twice within the same half century Germans had accepted defeat. History had turned over a new chapter.

Rheims is a little French town famous for its champagne. The French spell it 'Reims'. There is also a Cathedral for which it is famous. It is, therefore, a place both of holy worship and of jubiliations, as suggested by its Cathedral and its champagne. It was midnight when borne on the back of a jeep I hurried into this unpretentious little French town in the province also called Champagne, North East of Paris. The clock of the Town Hall registered our entry with 12 chimes. Here was to be played the final act of the greatest drama in history. It was a tragedy of civilisation which had taken over five long years to play.

Fate had destined that the curtain falling on this drama should fall in this little French vine-growing town which would henceforth be known through the generations for something more than its Cathedral and its Champagne. It was ironic that so historical an event should take place in the unpretentious building of a school of technology, made of nothing more than red brick, symbolizing perhaps

the common man—lawyers, workers, labourers, farmers, technicians, men from mill, farm and factory, men from all walks of life. The building had been the Supreme Commander's headquarters for several months and before him it had the dubious honour of having been used by the Germans for similar purposes.

The surrendering Nazis, on arrival, requested to wash before meeting high-ranking personnel. They were probably trying to wash away the dirt of 11 years of Nazism and to cleanse away in some degree also the blood of those millions they had murdered in the camps in Belsen, Dachau and Buchenwald.

Later that day, Saturday, they were escorted to General Bedell-Smith. Admiral Friedeburg didn't salute but came to attention when confronted by high-ranking allied personnel in Bedell-Smith's outer office.

There was a parallel in these armistice negotiations with those of the last war. But on both occasions, the Delegation offering surrender had no credentials to surrender and both had to refer back for the necessary formalities.

Bedell-Smith impressed upon the Germans the hopelessness of the German military position. Meanwhile Moscow, Washington and London were kept informed of the progress of events and it was explained to them that Admiral Friedeburg had only authorised the offer of surrender of the remaining German forces on the westfront, which SHAEF refused.

All these negotiations were at the level of the Chief of the Staff. The Supreme Commander never appeared on the scene. This is the normal custom. However, it was he who ruled it from without, when

it was discovered that the Germans were playing for time with a view to getting their nationals through American lines and thereby delaying surrender. Admiral Friedeburg then despatched a message at 8 o'clock to Grand Admiral Doenitz in SHAEF code to the Second British Army for onward transmission by a courier. This message said General Smith put forward two proposals, namely: that Admiral Friedeburg should receive full authority to make complete and unconditional surrender in all theatres, or alternatively that Grand Admiral Doenitz should send his deputies with necessary authority to make complete surrender. Admiral Friedeburg also explained the results which would follow the answer to this signal to Grand Admiral Doenitz. The latter sent General Gustaf Jodl, Chief of Staff of the German Army, accompanied by his aide. They arrived in a dakota named Marie Lou II, flying two stars on a red pennant. It was now 5 o'clock, Sunday evening. An eye witness says General Jodl's face was completely expressionless and he strode arrogantly to the car waiting to take him to headquarters.

An eye-witness said that Brigadier Ford who met the party saluted and the salute was returned by the Germans. As General Jodl arrived at the headquarters he saw two detachments of German prisoners being marched to the mess. The Germans were saluted again by the military police on duty at General Eisenhower's headquarters, and again the Germans returned the salute. On every occasion they gave not the Hitler salute, but the salute of the German army—the orthodox military salute.

Soon negotiations were resumed again and it

was verified that General Jodl had all the necessary authority. The Germans appeared to want to stall for time again, and it was at this point that General Eisenhower, through General Smith, took a firm stand on the point of time. For General Eisenhower was concerned in saving as many lives as possible. He, therefore, gave the Germans an ultimatum that as from midnight on Sunday if the Germans did not unconditionally surrender, within 48 hours, he would order the closing of Allied lines, on the Eastern Side in any case no matter what happened after that. The effect would be that German nationals would not be able to pass them even after surrender later! This was General Eisenhower's trump-card. This strong attitude had its effect for, a few hours later, high Allied officers were seen hastily returning to headquarters followed by Russians and later by Germans. This was about 2.15 at night.

Things moved fast thereafter. The big Chiefs began to roll up one by one. There was General Morgan who planned D-Day invasion. There was Admiral Burrows. General Bedell-Smith came, followed by the Russians—the General and his interpreter. Then came Germans, one wearing a soldier's uniform of blue-grey, the other a uniform of the German Navy. Meanwhile, a little French family of father, mother and child were passing along the pavement near which history was being made, completely oblivious they had come—in more senses than one—so very close to it. The woman was more interested in the harvest which lay at her feet—the harvest of cigarette stumps which she collected and put into her husband's pocket. At the Rheims station was a solitary engine shunting. Its puffs were like

sighs of men which followed the announcement of this great and momentous unconditional surrender. For a second time Germany had lost the war and acknowledged defeat on French soil. The War of 1914 ended for them at Rethonde in the Forest of Compiègne. The actual coach in which the surrender was signed was taken back by Hitler after the fall of France. There was no dramatic artificiality this time. General Eisenhower's thoughts were for saving lives, not of stage-playing this last act. Throughout the war he never once allowed himself to be carried away by the thrill of the moment and to forget the issues that were still involved. He never once made a remark derogatory to his enemy. He was always the Supreme Commander and behaved every moment as befitting the position he held.

Inside the school of technology, which never dreamt, when it was built, it would play such an historic role—up a short flight of steps was the war-room of General Eisenhower. One year ago the Germans would have given half their wordly possessions to see this room, on the walls of which were maps with fronts marked—achievements and intentions, charts of the most secret type, casualty lists, records of stores landed, railway and communication systems. They were now paying with all of it.

It was in this room that the formalities of signing took place. It took, from 02.41 hours on Monday morning (Continental Time), approximately five minutes. Then the European war was over. The Germans had surrendered unconditionally. They had eaten the dust. They had tasted annihilation.

The table on which the Instrument of Surrender was signed was an old crack-topped table, made

of cheap white wood, which had been captured from the German stock. There was no covering on it, only an appearance of bareness about it, relieved simply by pencils and writing tablets and fountain pen. There was a small microphone installed to record what transpired for official historical record. No one smoked. The thoughts of those people were involved in bigger things. History was being made, great contemporary history. It was not only the end of war that was so important but it was also the beginning of a new life and a new hope for many millions of men.

The Nazi terror which had swept like a storm over Europe uprooting mighty trees which were once great people and great countries, had been held in check and subjugated. The mills of God had ground slowly but they had ground exceedingly fine. They had reduced that great heathen machine to pulp. They had squeezed every ounce of race superiority from those killers with thin sadist lips and murderous eyes. Unconditional surrender, that formula evolved at Casablanca fashioned by Roosevelt and Churchill and carried out by General Eisenhower, had been fulfilled. All the glory that was Man and his dignity had been restored in the world. That was the meaning of that little scene which took place at Rheims. As we drove back in our jeeps—behold, there was the dawn! And as the sun shone on the new day in Europe I saw little French children laughing under God's own sky.

The battle for mundane victory had been won. But the battle for men's minds had still to be fought.

*NO PEACE AT ALL*

Events have crowded thick and fast on one another since that morning we returned to Paris. The war with its grim associations was behind us, ahead the alluring vista of peace and prosperity. We were elated by the knowledge that World War II was over.

In that dawn of peace, it was difficult to believe that such a thing as a terrible and long-drawn-out war had ever been or ever would be. Already the war seemed far behind, a disturbing and unpleasant memory, a nightmare lingering in the caverns of the mind.

People were rapidly picking up the threads of their disrupted lives, weaving them together again in the familiar pattern of existence. The shadow of war that had lain like a deadly miasma over the world had been lifted. Serenity was returning again to the world.

Looking back now over the past three years, it seems that the reverberations of war have never died down and that peace has yet to be. A battle, it seems, and not the war, was over. There is conflict everywhere—no peace at all.

In Italy, the conflict between communism and its opponents is negating all prospects of peace in the near future. Signor de Gasperi is pitting his party strength against communist revolutionary Signor Togliatti. One Italian in four is a communist.

In waves of fury, opposing parties are battling for the upper hand. The politics of post-war Italy are violent and only the presence of Allied armies in the streets of that country foils a *coup d'etat* and bolsters up the Government.

I had had grim forebodings of the dangerous potentialities of the situation in this tempestuous land as I rubbed shoulders with the Italian populace during my stay there. I had seen sullen discontent on many faces. Acute economic conditions were fomenting little pustules of virulence all over the land. The economics of a country lie at the bottom of its politics. For years, under the fascist heel of their dictator, Benito Mussolini, all the resources that could have been utilized to build up a more contented Italy had been diverted to make the sinews of aggressive war. The discontent and bewilderment of these long-suffering half-dazed people could be easily played upon. So it has come to pass. It is no peace at all which has to be bolstered up by foreign bayonets.

In France too, the economic conditions touch the apex of a desperate day-to-day existence. Discontent released the forces of lawlessness which spell anarchy. The establishment of a communist regime was narrowly averted. The Government of France is running into perpetual trouble and post-war France is in a turbulent state.

With my knowledge of de Gaulle in France, picturing him from the Parisian angle against the French scene, I had felt that this man who had symbolized the resistance of France was not to be the leader of post-war France. Events have vindicated my estimate of the man. The power of this stodgy,



stiff-necked Frenchman has waned gradually so that his popularity today is but the shadow of the popularity that was once his.

Again, in that eternal trouble-spot of the Middle East—Palestine—is being fought out with shifting fortunes a bitter racio-religious Arab-Jewish war. The outcome of this issue will have a vital bearing on international events. In this Mid-East storm-centre, the interests of the United States and Great Britain conflict openly with those of Soviet Russia. The seeds of perpetual discord have been sown in this holy land.

In China, the Chiang-kai-shek Government is grappling for existence with the Communists and for a long time to come, at any rate, there is no prospect of peace in this sprawling land.

The Balkans have fallen into the Soviet sphere. The adjacent Baltic States and Poland cannot escape the consequences of their proximity to Russia. And in the various countries of the world, Russo-American rivalry is working to the snapping-point of tension.

I remember those languid pleasant mornings following the end of the war when, lying back in the Hotel Scribe, I would feel wonderfully at peace. Disquieting thoughts too would come to me then. I would think of the battered, bomb-pounded cities of the world ; of gay Paris which victorious hordes of Germans had trampled but could not crush ; of sun-flushed Italy which the power of Mussolini had overshadowed ; of stout-hearted London that had resisted the tidal wave of war ; of light-built Hiroshima where the dazzling cataclysmic force of the atom bomb had been released ; of Berlin, the heart of

mechanised Germany, which had incubated the war ; of Berlin the most, because it was evident she was going to be a major problem for the Allies, and might quite possibly prove the springboard for another war. I saw then clearly that the establishment of Four-Power control over Berlin would contain the ingredients of conflict that could start another global war. And yet it was difficult to believe that the world which in rivulets of tears and blood had paid the stupendous price of World War II, would again work itself to the white-heat of war.

Again and again, over these past three years of peace, I have been troubled by a horrible feeling of the shadows of war closing in on the world again. In Berlin today, what I had feared is coming to pass.

The blockade of Berlin is symbolic of the breakdown of Four-Power rule in Germany and, considered against the context of world affairs, is a grim portent of war. In Berlin, the tug-o'war is on, and the future is dismal whatever the outcome of this trial of strength. If the blockade is raised, the Powers will revert to the position that existed before it. The elements of discord and further trouble will still be there. There is no prospect of final peace or a conclusive settlement. War solves no problems permanently. The history of the world shows this. The existence of foreign troops in Berlin is an overture to further conflict. Russia obviously will not be prepared to withdraw and allow Germany to grow into a country after the western pattern. The challenge of Russia, on the other hand, is one which the Allies will not take lying down. Will diplomacy triumph over political power-play? Four-Power politics in Berlin are dynamite-loaded and very little

friction is required to produce the combustion that may start off a rapidly-widening circle of detonations which will embroil us in a global war.

In more peaceful parts of the country, where there is no open warfare or pitched battles, there is a great political and economic turmoil. A famous General, Von Clausewitz, has said : 'War is the continuation of politics by other means.' By this definition, the stormy politics of such countries may lead them any day into war : a deadly internecine war, or a war between nations.

To many it seems most unlikely that there will ever again be a repetition of the mass tragedy that was the World War II. Asia at least will not allow herself to be dragged into the western political wrangles. In China, for long years they have taken a rough beating and yet stood up against the invaders. Now they look forward to the day when their internal problems will be resolved and peace will come to them at last. In Japan, the atomized wastes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are lessons which the Japanese are not likely to forget for generations to come.

The bombers did not fly over India, and India escaped comparatively unscathed. But after a long grapple for swaraj, with the terrible disruption of lives consequent upon Partition, with the war of nerves and living tissues raging on several fronts, what the average Indian looks for today is peace ; peace not only for himself but for the generations to follow.

In the heart of the common man all over the world, the craving for peace is overriding. And yet peace does not come to those who hope and passively wait for it. In the close-knit modern world,

isolationism is impossible. However much we may like not to be embroiled in a war, we will be compelled by the conspiracy of international politics to become active partisans in it. The whirlpool of an European war will suck us into it.

To fight for its preservation is the burden of freedom. No nation today is strong enough to stand by itself. Not merely home interests but the expediency of outside circumstances will shape our foreign policy. If there is a war—would that there never will be—we cannot remain neutral, however much we may desire to do so.

In Europe the race for armaments is already on. Europe is divided into two gigantic camps, centring round Russia and America.

Seen against the background of international power-play, Henry Wallace's estimate that the next war is fifteen years off seems more optimistic than conservative. Anywhere in this agitated world, at any unguarded moment, the fuse may be lit that would cause a conflagration more widespread, more devastating, than any previous war.

And if it comes, the peoples of the East have necessarily by force of international situation, to line up on this side or that. The events of the world will set the pace for us. We shall have to keep time to it.



